

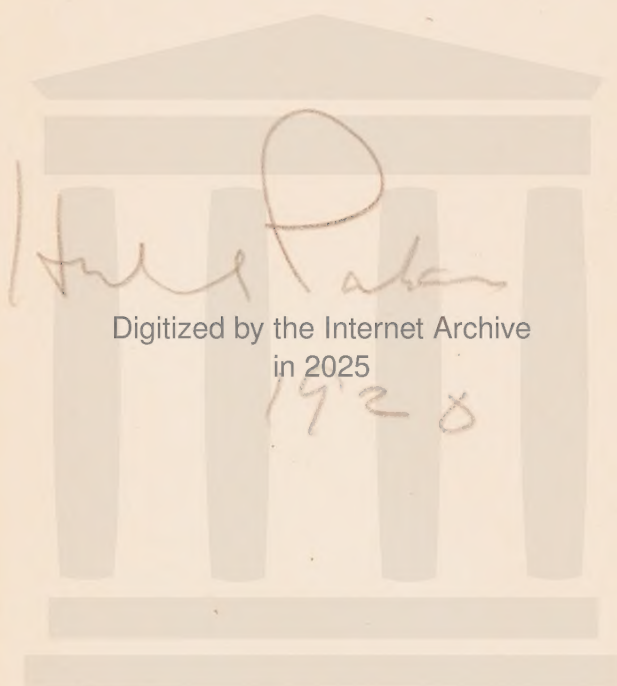
A MODERN
BUCCANEER

ROLF BOLDREWOOD

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A MODERN BUCCANEER







A MODERN BUCCANEER

BY

ROLF BOLDREWOOD

AUTHOR OF 'ROBBERY UNDER ARMS'

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I

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A MODERN BUCCANEER

CHAPTER I

MY FIRST VOYAGE

BORN near Sydney harbour, nursery of the seamen of the South, I could swim almost as soon as I could walk, and sail a boat at an age when most children are forbidden to go near the water. We came of a salt-water stock. My father had been a sea-captain for the greater part of his life, after a youth spent in every kind of craft, from a cutter to a man-of-war. No part of the habitable globe was unfamiliar to him : from

India to the Pole, from Russia to the Brazils, from the China Sea to the Bight of Benin—every harbour was a home.

He had nursed one crew frost-bitten in Archangel, when the blankets had to be cut up for mittens; had watched by the beds of another, decimated by yellow fever in Jamaica; had marked up the 'death's-head and cross-bones' in the margin of the log-book, to denote the loss by tetanus of the wounded by poisoned arrows on Bougainville Island; and had fought hand to hand with the stubborn Maories of Taranaki. Wounds and death, privation and pestilence, wrecks and tempests were with him household words, close comrades. What were they but symbols, nature-pictures, the cards dealt by fate? You lost the stake or rose a winner. Men who had played the game of life all round knew this. He accepted fortune, fair or foul, as he did the weather—

a favour or a force of nature to be enjoyed or defied. But to be commented upon, much less complained of? Hardly. And as fate had willed it, the worn though unwearied sea-king had seen fit to heave anchor, so to speak, and moor his vessels—for he owned more than one—in this the fairest haven of the southern main. Once before in youth had he seen and never forgotten the frowning headlands, beyond which lay so peerless a harbour, such wealth of anchorage, so mild a clime, so boundless an extent of virgin soil; from which he, ‘a picked man of countries,’ even then prophesied wealth, population, and empire in the future.

Here, then, a generation later, he brought his newly-wedded wife. Here was I, Hilary Telfer, destined to see the light.

From the mid-city street of Sydney is but a stone’s throw to the wharves and quays, magnificent water-ways in which those ocean

palaces of the present day, the liners of the P. and O. and the Orient, lie moored, and but a plank divides the impatient passenger from the busy mart. Not that such stately ships were visitors in my school-boy days. Sydney was then a grass-grown, quiet seaport, boasting some fifty thousand inhabitants, with a fleet of vessels small in size and of humble tonnage.

But, though unpretending of aspect, to the eager-hearted, imaginative school-boy they were rich as Spanish galleons. For were they not laden with uncounted treasure, weighed down with wealth beyond the fabled hoards of the pirates of the Spanish Main, upon whose dark deeds and desperate adventures I had so greedily feasted?

Each vessel that swept through the Heads at midnight, or marked the white-walled mansions and pine-crowned promontories rise faintly out of the pearl-hued dawn, was

for me a volume filled with romance and mystery. Sat there not on the forecastle of that South Sea whaler, silent, scornful, imperturbable, the young Maori chief, nursing in his breast the deep revenge for a hasty blow, which on the return voyage to New Zealand and the home of his tribe was to take the form of a massacre of the whole ship's company?

Yes, captain and officers, passengers and crew, every man on that ship paid the death penalty for the mate's hard word and blow. The insult to a Rangatira must be wiped out in blood.

The trader of the South Sea Islands was a marine marvel which I was never weary of studying.

I generally managed to make friends with one or other of the crew, who permitted me to explore the lower deck and feed my fancy upon the treasures from that paradise

with which the voyager from an enchanted ocean had surely freighted his vessel. Strange bows and arrows—the latter poison-tipped, as I was always assured, perhaps as a precautionary measure—piles of shad-docks, tons of bananas, idols, skulls, spears, clubs, woven cloth of curious fabric, an endless store of unfamiliar foreign commodities.

Among the crew were always a few half-castes mingled with the grizzled, weather-beaten British sea-dogs. Perhaps a boat's crew of the islanders themselves, born sailors, and as much at home in water as on land.

Seldom did I leave, however unwillingly, the deck of one of these fairy barks, without registering a vow that the year in which I left school should see me a gay sailor-boy, bound on my first voyage in search of dangerous adventures and that splendidly

untrammelled career which was so surely to result in fortune and distinction.

Then the whaleships! In that old time, Sydney harbour was rarely without a score or more of them. In their way they were portents and wonders of the deep. Fortune failed them at times. The second year might find them far from full of the high-priced whale-oil. The capricious cetacean was not to be depended upon in migration from one 'whaling ground' to another. Sometimes a 'favourite' ship—lucky in spite of everything—would come flaunting in after an absence of merely eleven or twelve months—such were the *Florentia* and the *Proteus*—full to the hatches, while three long years would have elapsed before her consort, sailing on the same day and fitted up much in the same way, would crawl sadly into Snail's or Neutral Bay, battered and tempest-tossed, but three-quarter full even then, a

mark for the rough wit of the port, to pay off an impoverished crew and confront unsmiling or incredulous owners.

Every kind of disaster would have befallen her. When she got fast to a ninety-barrel whale, her boats would be stoven in. When all was well, no cheery shout of 'There she spouts!' would be heard for days. Savage islanders would attack her doggedly, and hardly be beaten off. Every kind of evil omen would be justified, until the crew came to believe that they were sailing with an Australian Vanderdecken, and would never see a port again.

.

The grudging childish years had rolled by, and now I was seventeen years of age—fitted, as I fully believed, to begin the battle of life in earnest, and ardent for the fray. As to my personal qualifications for a life on the ocean wave, and well I knew no other

would have contented me, let the reader judge. At the age when tall lads are often found to have out-grown their strength, I had attained the fullest stature of manhood ; wide-chested and muscular, constant exercise with oar and sail had developed my frame and toughened my sinews, until I held myself, with some reason, to be a match in strength and activity for most men I was likely to meet.

In the rowing contests to which Australians of the shore have always been devoted, more particularly the privileged citizens of Sydney, I had always taken a leading part. More than once, in a hard-fought finish, had I been lifted out fainting or insensible.

My curling fair hair and blue eyes bore token of our Norse blood and Anglo-Norman descent. The family held a tradition that our surname came from Taillefer, the warrior minstrel who rode in the forefront of Duke

William's army at Hastings. Strangely, too, a passionate love of song had always clung to the race. 'Sir Hilary charged at Agincourt,' as saith the ballad. Roving and adventure ran in the blood for generations uncounted.

For all that, trouble arose when I announced my resolve. My schoolmates had settled down in the offices of merchants, bankers, and lawyers, why could not I do the same? My mother's tears fell fast as she tried in vain to dissuade me from my resolution. My father was neutral. He knew well the intensity of the feeling. 'If born in a boy,' he said, 'as it was in me, it is his fate—nothing on earth can turn him from it; if you stop him you will make a bad landsman and spoil a good sailor. Let him go! he must take his chance like another man. God is above the wave as over the earth. If it be his fate, the perils of the deep

will be no more than the breezes of the bay.'

It was decided at length that I should be allowed to go on my way. To the islands of the South Pacific my heart pointed as truly as ever did compass-needle to the North.

I had read every book that had ever been written about them, from Captain Cook's *Voyages* to *The Mutiny of the Bounty*. In my dreams how many times had I seen the purple mountains, the green glow of the fairy woodlands, had bathed in the crystal streams, and heard the endless surf music on the encircling reef, cheered the canoes loaded with fruit racing for their market in the crimson flush of the paradisal morn, or lingered amidst the Aïdenns of the charmed main, where the flower-crowned children of nature—maidens beauteous as angels—roamed in careless happiness and joyous freedom! It was an entrancing picture.

Why should I stay in this prosaic land, where men wore the hideous costume of their forefathers, and women, false to all canons of art, still clung to their outworn garb?

What did I care for the sheep and cattle, the tending of which enriched my compatriots?

A world of romance, mystery, and adventure lay open and inviting. The die was cast. The spell of the sea was upon me.

.

My father's accumulations had amounted to a reasonable capital, as things went in those Arcadian non-speculative days. He was not altogether without a commercial faculty, which had enabled him to make prudent investments in city and suburban lands. These the steadily improving markets were destined to turn into value as yet undreamed of.

It was not thought befitting that I should ship as an apprentice or foremost hand, though I was perfectly willing, even eager, for a start in any way. A more suitable style of equipment was arranged. An agreement was entered into with the owner of a vessel bound for San Francisco *viâ* Honolulu, by which a proportion of the cargo was purchased in my name, and I was, after some discussion, duly installed as supercargo. It may be thought that I was too young for such a responsible post. But I was old for my age. I had a man's courage and ambition. I had studied navigation to some purpose; could 'hand reef and steer,' and in the management of a boat, or acquaintance with every rope, sail, and spar on board of a vessel, I held myself, if not an A. B., fully qualified for that rank and position.

Words would fail to describe my joy and exultation when I found myself at length on

blue water, in a vessel which I might fairly describe as 'our little craft,' bound for foreign parts and strange cities. I speedily made the acquaintance of the crew—a strangely assembled lot, mostly shady as to character and reckless as to speech, but without exception true 'sailor men.' At that time of day, employment on the high seas was neither so easy to obtain nor so well paid as at present. The jolly tars of the period were therefore less independent and inclined to cavil at minor discomforts. Once shipped, they worked with a will, and but little fault could be found with their courage or seamanship.

Among other joys and delights which I promised myself, had been a closer acquaintance with the life and times of a picturesque and romantic personage, known and feared, if all tales were true, throughout the South Seas. This was the famous, the celebrated

Captain Hayston, whose name was indeed a spell to conjure with from New Zealand to the Line Islands.

Much that could excite a boyish imagination had been related to me concerning him. One man professing an intimate knowledge had described him as 'a real pirate.' Could higher praise be awarded? I put together all the tales I had heard about him—his great stature and vast strength, his reckless courage, his hair-breadth escapes, his wonderful brig,—cousin german, no doubt, to the 'long low wicked-looking craft' in the pages of *Tom Cringle's Log* and other veracious historiettes, 'nourishing a youth sublime,' in the long bright summer days of old; those days when we fished and bathed, ate oysters, and read alternately from early morn till the lighthouse on the South Head flashed out! My heroes had been difficult to find hitherto; they had mostly eluded my grasp. But this

one was real and tangible. He would be fully up to description. His splendid scorn of law and order, mercy or moderation, his unquestioned control over mutinous crews and fierce islanders, illumined by occasional homicides and abductions, all these splendours and glories so stirred my blood, that I felt, if I could only once behold my boyhood's idol, I should not have lived in vain. Among the crew, fortunately for me as I then thought, was a sailor who had actually known in the flesh the idol of my day-dreams.

‘And it's the great Captain Hayston you'd like to hear about,’ said Dan Daly, as we sat together in the foc'sle head of the old barque *Clarkstone*, before we made Honolulu. Dan had been a South Sea beach-comber and whaler; moreover, had been marooned, according to his own account, escaping only by a miracle; a trader's head-man—once, indeed,

more than half-killed by a rush of natives on the station. With every kind of dangerous experience short of death and burial he was familiar. On which account I regarded him with a fine boyish admiration. What a night was it, superbly beautiful, when I hung upon his words, as we sat together gazing over the moonlit water! We had changed our course owing to some dispute about food between captain and crew, and were now heading for the island of Rurutu, where fresh provisions were attainable. As I listened spellbound and entranced, the barque's bows slowly rose and fell, the wavering moonlight streamed down upon the deck, the sails, the black masses of cordage, while ghostly shadows moved rhythmically, in answering measure to every motion of the vessel.

'You must know,' said Dan, in grave commencement, 'it's nigh upon five years

ago, when I woke up one morning in the "Calaboose," as they call the "lock-up" in Papiete, with a broken head. It's the port of the island of Tahiti. I was one of the hands of the American brig *Cherokee*, and we'd put in there on our way to San Francisco from Sydney. The skipper had given us liberty, so we went ashore and began drinking and having some fun. There was some wahines in it, in coorse—that's whats they call the women in thim parts. Somehow or other I got a knock on the head, and remimbered nothing more until I woke up in the "Calaboose," where I was charged with batin' a native till he was nigh dead. To make a long story short, I got six months "hard," and the ship sailed away without me.

'When I'd served my time, I walks into the American Consulate and asks for a passage to California.

"Clear out," says the Consul, "you red-

headed varmint; I have nothing to say to you, after beating an inoffensive native in the manner you did."

"By the powers," says I to myself, "you're a big blackguard, Dan Daly, when you've had a taste of liquor, but if I remimber batin' any man, black, white, or whitey-brown, may I be keel-hauled. Howsomdever, that says nothing, the next thing's a new ship."

'So I steps down to the wharf and aboard a smart-looking schooner that belonged to Carl Brander, a big merchant in Tahiti, as rich as the Emperor of China, they used to say. The mate was aboard. "Do you want any hands?" says I.

"We do," says he. "You've a taking colour of hair for this trade, my lad."

"How's that?"

"Why, the girls down at Rimitara and Rurutu will just make love to you in a

body. Red hair's the making of a man in thim parts."

' Upon this I signed articles for six months in the schooner, and next day we sailed for a place called Bora-bora in the north-west. We didn't stay there long, but got under weigh for Rurutu next day. We weren't hardly clear of Bora-bora when we sights a brigantine away to windward and bearing down on us before the wind. As soon as she got close enough, she signalled that she wanted to send a boat aboard, so we hove to and waited.

' Our skipper had a look at the man who was steering the boat, whin he turns as pale as a sheet, and says he to the mate, " It's that devil Hayston! and that's the brigantine he and Captain Ben Peese ran away with from Panama."

' However, up alongside came the boat, and as fine a looking man as ever I set eyes on steps aboard amongst us.

“How do ye do, Captain?” says he.
“Where from and whither bound?”

‘The skipper was in a blue funk, I could see, for this Bully Hayston had a terrible bad name, so he answers him quite polite and civil.

“Can you spare me half a coil of two-inch Manilla?” asks the stranger, “and I’ll pay you your own price?”

‘The skipper got him the rope, the strange captain pays for it, and they goes below for a glass of grog. In half an hour, up on deck they comes again, our skipper half-seas over and laughing fit to kill himself.

“By George!” says he, “you’re the drollest card I ever came across. D—n me! if I wouldn’t like to take a trip with you myself!” and with that he struggles to the skylight and falls in a heap across it.

“Who’s the mate of this schooner?” sings out Hayston, in such a changed voice that it made me jump.

““ I am !” said the mate, who was standing in the waist.

““ Then where’s that Mangareva girl of yours? Come, look lively ! I know all about her from that fellow there,” pointing to the skipper.

‘ The mate had a young slip of a girl on board. She belonged to an island called Mangareva, and was as pretty a creature, with her big soft eyes and long curling hair, as ever I’d seen in my life. The mate just treated her the same as he would the finest lady, and was going to marry her at the next island where there was a missionary. When he heard who the strange captain was, he’d planted her down in the hold and covered her up with mats. He was a fine manly young chap, and as soon as he saw Hayston meant to take “ Taloo,” that was her name, he pulls out a pistol and says, “ Down in the hold, Captain Hayston ! and

as long as God gives me breath you'll never lay a finger on her. I'll put a bullet through her head rather than see her fall into the hands of a man like you." The strange captain just gives a laugh and pulls his long moustache. Then he walks up to the mate and slaps him on the shoulder.

" "You've got the right grit in you," says he. "I'd like to have a man like you on board my ship"; and the next second he gripped the pistol out of the mate's hand and sent it spinning along the deck. The mate fought like a tiger, but he was a child in the other man's grasp. All the time Hayston kept up that devilish laugh of his. Then, as he saw me and Tom Lynch coming to help the mate, he says something in a foreign lingo, and the boat's crew jumps on board amongst us, every one of them with a pistol. But for all that they seems a decent lot of chaps.

‘ Hayston still held the mate by his wrists, laughing in his face as if he was having the finest fun in the world, when up comes Taloo out of the hold by way of the foc’sle bulk-head, with her long hair hanging over her shoulders, and the tears streaming down her cheeks.

‘ She flings herself down at the Captain’s feet, and clasps her arms round his knees.

‘ “No, no! no kill Ted!” she kept on crying, just about all the English she knew.

‘ “You pretty little thing,” says he, “I wouldn’t hurt your Ted for the world.” Then he lets go the mate and takes her hand and shakes it.

‘ “What’s your name, my man?”

‘ “Ted Bannington!” says the mate.

‘ “Well, Ted Bannington, look here; if you’d showed any funk I’d have taken the girl in spite of you and your whole ship’s company. If a man don’t think a woman

good enough to fight for, he deserves to lose her if a better man comes along."

'Taloo put out one little hand, the other hand and arm was round the mate's neck, shaking like a leaf too.

" "I'm so sorry if I've hurt your wrists," says he to the mate, most polite. Then he gave some orders to the boat's crew, who pulled away to the brigantine. After they had gone he walked aft with the mate, the two chatting like the best friends in the world, and I'll be hanged if that same mate wasn't laughing fit to split at some of the yarns the other chap was spinning, sitting on the skylight, with the Captain lying at their feet as drunk as Davy's sow.

'Presently the boat comes alongside agin, and a chap walks aft and gives the strange captain a parcel.

" "You'll please accept this as a friendly gift from Bully Hayston," says he to the

mate ; and then he takes a ten-dollar piece out of his pocket and gives it to Taloo. "Drill a hole in it, and hang it round the neck of your first child for luck."

' He shakes hands with her and the mate, jumps into the boat, and steers for the brigantine. In another ten minutes she squared away and stood to the south-east.

" " Come here, Dan," says the mate to me ; "see what he's given me ! " 'Twas a beautiful chronometer bran new, in a splendid case. The mate said he'd never seen one like it before.

' Well, that was the first time I ever seen Bully Hayston, though I did a few times afterwards, and the brigantine too.

' They do say he's a thundering scoundrel, but a pleasanter-spoken gentleman I never met in my life.'

CHAPTER II

WILLIAM HENRY HAYSTON

THESE were the first particulars I ever heard of the man who had afterwards so great an influence upon my destiny that no incident of my sojourn with him will ever be forgotten. A man with whom I went into the jaws of death and returned unhurt. A man who, no matter what his faults may have been, possessed qualities which, had they been devoted to higher aims in life, might have rendered him the hero of a nation.

Our Captain's altercation with the crew nearly blossomed into a mutiny. This was compromised, however, one of the condi-

tions of peace being that we should touch at Rurutu, one of the five islands forming the Tubuai group. This we accordingly did, and, steering for San Francisco, experienced no further adventures until we sighted the Golden Gate. When our cargo was sold I left the ship.

My occupation being from this time gone, I used to stroll down to the wharf from my lodgings in Harvard Street to look at the foreign vessels. Wandering aimlessly, I one day made the acquaintance of a 'hard-shell down-Easter,' with the truly American name of Slocum, master of a venerable-looking crate called the *Constitution*. He himself was a dried-up specimen of the old style of Yankee captain, with a face that resembled in colour a brown painted oilskin, and hands like an albatross's feet. He had been running for a number of years to Tahiti, taking out timber and returning with island produce.

Not being a proud man, he permitted me to stand drinks for him in a well-known liquor saloon in Third Street, where we had long yarns over his trading adventures in the Pacific.

One Sunday morning, I remember it as if yesterday, we were sitting in a private room off the bar. Slocum was advising me to come with him on his next trip and share the luxuries of the *Constitution's* table, for which he asked the modest sum of a hundred dollars to Tahiti and back, when we heard some one enter and address the bar-keeper. 'Great Scott!' came the reply, 'it's Captain Hayston! How air you, Captain, and whar d'ye come from?'

'I've come to try and find Ben Peese. We're going to form a new station at Arrecifu. He left me at Yap in the Carolines to come here and buy a schooner with a light draught; but he never turned

up ; I'm afraid that after he left Yap he met with some accident.'

The moment Slocum heard the stranger's voice his face underwent a marvellous change. All his assurance seemed to have left him. He whispered to me, 'That's Bully Hayston! I guess I'll lie low till he clears out. I don't want to be seen with him, as it'll sorter damage my character. Besides, he's such a vi'lent critter.'

The next moment we heard the new-comer say to the barman :

'Say, Fred, I've been down to that old schooner the *Constitution*, but couldn't find Slocum aboard. They told me he often came here to get a cheap drink. I want him to take a letter to Tahiti. Do you know where he is?'

Slocum saw it was of no use attempting to 'lie low,' so with a nervous hand he opened the door.

I've knocked about the world a good deal since I sat in the little back parlour in Third Street, Frisco, but neither before nor since I left Strong's Island have I seen such a splendid specimen of humanity as the man who then entered.

Much that I am about to relate I learned during my later experience.

William Henry Hayston was born in one of the Western States of America, and received his education at Norfolk, Virginia. As his first appointment he obtained a cadetship in the United States Revenue Service, subsequently retiring to become captain of one of the large lake steamers.

In '55 he joined the navy, serving with great gallantry under Admiral Farragut. The reported reason of his leaving the service was a disagreement with Captain Carroll, afterwards commander of the rebel

cruiser *Shenandoah*. So bitter was their feud, that years afterwards, when that vessel was in the South Pacific, her commander made no secret of his ardent wish to meet Hayston and settle accounts with him, even to the death.

Hayston was a giant in stature: six feet four in height, with a chest that measured, from shoulder to shoulder, forty-nine inches; and there was nothing clumsy about him, as his many antagonists could testify. His strength was enormous, and he was proud of it. But, apart from his magnificent physique, Hayston was one of the most remarkably handsome men about this time that I have ever seen. His hair fell in clusters across his forehead, above laughing eyes of the brightest blue; his nose was a bold aquiline; a well-cut, full-lipped mouth that could set like fate was covered by a huge moustache. A Vandyke beard com-

pleted the *tout ensemble* of a visage which, once seen, was rarely forgotten by friend or foe. Taking him altogether, what with face, figure, and manner, he had a personal magnetism only too fatally attractive, as many a man—ay, and woman too—knew to their cost. He was my beau-ideal of a naval officer—bold and masterful, yet soft and pleasant-voiced withal when he chose to conciliate. His sole disfigurement—not wholly so, perhaps, in the eye of his admirers—was a sabre cut which extended from the right temple to his ear.

For his character, the one controlling influence in his life was an ungovernable temper. It was utterly beyond his mastery. Let any one offend him, and though he might have been smiling the instant before, the blue eyes would suddenly turn almost black, his face become a deep purple. Then it was time for friend or foe to beware. For

I never saw the man that could stand up to him. Strangely enough, I have sometimes seen him go laughing through a fight until he had finished his man. At other times his cyclone of a mood would discharge itself without warning or restraint. It was probably this appalling temper that gained him a character for being bloodthirsty; for, once roused, nothing could stop him. Yet I do him the justice to say that I never once witnessed an act of deliberate cruelty at his hands. In the islands he was surrounded by a strange collection of the greatest scoundrels unhung. There, of necessity, his rule was one of 'blood and iron.'

And now for his pleasing traits. He was one of the most fascinating companions possible. He possessed a splendid baritone voice and affected the songs of Schumann and the German composers. He was an accomplished musician, playing on the

pianoforte, violin, and, in default of a better instrument, even on the accordion. He spoke German, French, and Spanish, as well as the island languages, fluently. Generous to a fault, in spite of repeated lessons, he would insist on trusting again and again those in whom he believed. But once convinced that he had been falsely dealt with, the culprit would have fared nearly as well in the jaws of a tiger. He was utterly without fear, under any and all circumstances, even the most desperate, and was naturally a hater of every phase of meanness or cowardice. But one more trait, and my sketch is complete. He had a fatal weakness where the fairer sex was concerned. To one of them he owed his first war with society. To the consequences of that false step might have been traced the reckless career which dishonoured his manhood and led to the final catastrophe.

‘Come, gentlemen!’ he said on entering—in so pleasant and kindly a tone, that I felt drawn towards him at once, ‘let us sit down and have a drink together.’

We went back to the room, Slocum, I could see, feeling intensely uncomfortable, fidgeting and twisting. As we sat down I took a good look at the man of whom I had heard so much. Heard of his daring deeds in the China seas; of a wild career in the Pacific Islands; of his bold defiance of law and order; besides strange tales of mysterious cruises in the north-west among the Caroline and Pelew Islands.

‘And how air yer, Captain?’ said Slocum with forced hilarity.

‘I’m devilish glad to see *you*,’ replied Hayston; ‘what about that barque of mine you stripped down at the Marshalls, you porpoise-hided skunk?’

‘True as gospel, Captain, I didn’t know

she was yours. There was a trader at Arnu, you know the man, an Italian critter, but they call him George Brown, and he says to me, "Captain Slocum," says he, "there's a big lump of a timber-ship cast away on one of them reefs near Alluk, and if you can get up to her you'll make a powerful haul. She's new coppered, and hasn't broke up yet." So I gave him fifty dollars, and promised him four hundred and fifty more if his news was reliable ; if that ain't the solid facts of the case I hope I may be paralysed.'

'Oh ! so it was George who put you on to take my property, was it ? and he my trader too ; well, Slocum, I can't blame you. But now I'll tell you my "*facts*" : that barque was wrecked ; the skipper and crew were picked up by Ben Peese and taken to China. He bought the barque for me for four hundred dollars, and I beat up to Arnu, and asked George if he would get me fifty Arnu natives

to go with me to the wreck and either try and float it or strip her. The d—d macaroni-eating sweep promised to get me the men in a week or two, so I squared away for Madura, where I had two traders. Bad weather came on, and when I got back to Arnu, the fellow told me that a big canoe had come down from the Radacks and reported that the barque had gone to pieces. The infernal scoundrel! Had I known that he had put you on to her I'd have taken it out of his hide. Who is this young gentleman?'

'A friend of mine, Captain, thinking of takin' a voyage with me for recruitin' of his health,' and the lantern-jawed Slocum introduced us.

Drawing his seat up to me, Hayston placed his hand on my shoulder, and said with a laugh, looking intensely at Slocum, who was nervously twisting his fingers, 'Oh! a recruitin' of his health, is he? or rather recruitin' of your pocket? I'm glad I dropped

in on you and made his acquaintance. I could tell him a few droll stories about the pious Slocum.'

Slocum said nothing, but laughed in a sickly way.

Leaning forward with a smiling face, he said, 'What did you clear out of my barque, you good Slocum?'

'Nigh on a thousand dollars.'

'You know you lie, Slocum! you must have done better than that.'

'I kin show my receipts if you come aboard,' he answered in shaky tones.

'Well, I'll take your word, you sanctimonious old shark, and five hundred dollars for my share.'

'Why, sartin, Captain! that's fair and square,' said the other, as his sallow face lighted up; 'I'll give you the dollars to-morrow morning.'

'Right you are. Come to the Lick house

at ten o'clock. Say, my pious friend, what would our good Father Damien think if I told him that pretty story about the six Solomon Island people you picked up at sea, and sold to a sugar planter ?'

The trader's visage turned green, as with a deprecating gesture towards me he seemed to implore Hayston's silence.

'Ha! ha! don't get scared. Business matters, my lad,' he said, turning to me his merry blue eyes, and patting me on the back. 'Where are you staying here?'

I told him. Then as we were rising to go, speaking to me, and looking Slocum in the face, he said, 'Don't have any truck with Master Slocum, he'll skin you of every dollar you've got, and like as not turn you adrift at some place you can't get away from. Isn't that so, my saintly friend?'

Slocum flinched like a whipped hound, but said nothing. Then, shaking hands with me,

and saying if ever I came to the Pacific and dropped across him or Captain Ben Peese I should meet a hearty welcome, he strode out, with the shambling figure of the down easter under his lee.

That was the last I saw of the two captains for many a long day, for a few days later the *Constitution* cleared out for Tahiti, and I couldn't learn anything more about Hayston. Whether he was then in command of a vessel, or had merely come up as passenger in some other ship, I could not ascertain. All the bar-keeper knew about him was that he was a gentleman with plenty of money and a h—l of a temper, if anybody bothered him with questions.

Little I thought at the time that we were fated to meet again, or that where we once more forgathered would be under the tropic sun of Polynesia.

CHAPTER III

IN SAMOA

FROM what I have said about Hayston, it will readily be understood that every tale relating to him was strangely exciting to my boyish mind. For me he was the incarnation of all that was utterly reckless, possibly wicked, and of course, as such, possessed a fascination that a better man would have failed to inspire.

My hero, however, had disappeared, and with him all zest seemed to have gone out of life at Frisco. So after mooning about for a few weeks I resolved on returning to Sydney.

My friends on the Pacific slope did their best to dissuade me, trying to instil the idea into my head that I was cut out for a merchant prince by disposition and intellect. But I heeded not the voice of the charmer. The only walk in life for which I felt myself thoroughly fitted was that of an armed cruiser through the South Sea Islands. All other vocations were tame and colourless in comparison. I could fancy myself parading the deck of my vessel, pistol at belt, dagger in sheath, a band of cut-throats trembling at my glance, and a bevy of dark-skinned princesses ready to die for me at a moment's notice, or to keep the flies from bothering, whichever I preferred.

I may state 'right here,' as the Yankees have it, that I did not become a 'free trader,' though at one time I had a close shave of being run up to the yardarm of

a British man-of-war in that identical capacity. But this came later on.

I returned, therefore, to my native Sydney in due course of time, and as a wholesome corrective after my somewhat erratic experiences, was placed by my father in a merchant's office. But the colourless monotony became absolutely killing. It was awful to be stuck there, adding up columns of pounds, shillings, and pence, and writing business letters, while there was stabbing, shooting, and all sorts of wild excitement going on 'away down in the islands.'

It was about this time that I made the acquaintance of certain South Sea Islanders belonging to whalers or trading vessels. With one of them, named George, a native of Raratonga, I became intimate. He impressed me with his intelligence, and amused me with his descriptions of island life. He had just returned from a whaling

voyage in the barque *Adventurer*, belonging to the well-known firm of Robert Towns and Company.

So when George, having been paid off in Sydney with a handsome cheque, confided to me that he intended going back to the Navigators' Islands, where he had previously spent some years, in order to open a small trading station, my unrest returned. He had a hundred pounds which he wished to invest in trade-goods, so I took him round the Sydney firms and saw him fairly dealt with. A week afterwards he sailed to Samoa *viâ* Tonga, in the *Taoji Vuna*, a schooner belonging to King George of that ilk.

Before he left he told me that two of his countrymen were trading for Captain Hayston—one at Marhiki, and one at Fakaofo, in the Union group. Both had made money, and he believed that Captain

Hayston had fixed upon Apia, the chief port of Samoa, as his headquarters.

Need I say that this information interested me greatly, and I asked George no end of questions. But the schooner was just leaving the wharf in tow of a tug, and my dark-skinned friend having shipped as an A. B., was no longer of the 'leisure classes.' So, grasping my hand, and telling me where to hear of him if I ever came to Samoa, we parted.

Before going further let me explain the nature of a Polynesian trader's mission.

On the greater number of the islands white men are resident, who act as agents for a firm of merchants, for masters of vessels, or on their own account. In some cases a piece of ground is rented from the king or chief whereon to make the trading station. In others the rulers are paid a protection fee. Then, if a trader is

murdered, his principal can claim blood for blood. This, however, is rarely resorted to. A trader once settled on his station proceeds to obtain cocoa-nuts from the natives, for which he pays in dollars or 'trade.' He further employs them to scrape the fruit into troughs exposed to the sun, by which process the cocoa-nut oil is extracted. Of late years 'copra' has taken the place of the oil. This material—the dried kernel of the nut, has become far more valuable; for when crushed by powerful machinery the refuse is pressed into oil-cake, and proved to be excellent food for cattle.

To be a good trader requires pluck, tact, and business capacity. Many traders meet their death for want of one or other of these attributes. All through the South Seas, more especially in the Line Islands, are to be found the most reckless despera-

does living. Their uncontrolled passions lead them to commit acts which the natives naturally resent ; the usual result being that if the trader fails to kill or terrorise them, they do society a kindness by ridding it of him. Then comes the not infrequent shelling of a native village by an avenging man-of-war. And thus civilisation keeps ever moving onwards.

The traders were making fortunes in the South Seas at that time, according to George. I returned to business with a mind full of projects. The glamour of the sea. The magic attraction of blue water was again upon me ; I was powerless to resist. My father smiled. My mother and sisters wept afresh. I bowed myself, nevertheless, to my fate. In a fortnight I bade my relations farewell—all unworthy as I felt myself of their affection. Inwardly exultant, though decently uncheerful, I took passage a fort-

night later in a barque trading to the Friendly and Navigators' Islands. She was called the *Rotumah*, belonging to Messrs. M'Donald, Smith, and Company, of Hunter Street, Sydney. Her captain was a Canadian named Robertson, of great experience in the island trade.

There were two other passengers—a lady going to join her brother who was in business at Nukulofa, in Tonga, and a fine old French priest whom we were taking to Samoa. The latter was very kind to me, and during our passage through the Friendly Islands I was frequently the guest of his brother missionaries at their various stations in the groups.

How shall I describe my feelings, landed at last among the charmed isles of the South, where I had come to stay, I told myself? Generally speaking, how often is there a savour of disappointment, of antici-

pation unrealised, when the wish is achieved! But the reality here was beyond the most brilliant mental pictures ever painted. All things were fresh and novel. The coral reefs skirting the island shore upon which the surf broke ceaselessly with sullen roar. Cocoa-palms bowed with their feathery crests above a vegetation richly verdurous. The browns and yellows of the native villages so rich in tone, so foreign of aspect, excited my unaccustomed vision. Graceful figures, warm and dusky of colouring, passed to and fro. The groves of broad-leafed bananas. The group of white mission houses. The balmy, sensuous air. The transparent water, in which the very fish were strange in form and hue. All things soever, land and water—sea and sky—seemed to cry aloud to my eager, wondering soul, ‘Hither, O fortunate youth, hast thou come to a world new, perfect, and complete in itself—to a land of

Nature's fondness and profuse luxuriance, to that Aïdenn, long lost, mysteriously concealed for ages from all mankind.'

At the Marist Mission at Tongatabu I was received most kindly by the venerable Father Chevron, the head of the Church in Tonga. His had been a life truly remarkable. For fifty years he had laboured unceasingly among the savage races of Polynesia; had had hair-breadth escapes, and passed through deadliest perils. Like many of his colleagues he was unknown to fame, dying a few years later, beloved and respected by all, yet comparatively 'unhonoured and unsung.' During the whole course of my experiences in the Pacific I have never heard the roughest trader speak an ill word of the Marist Brothers. Their lives of ceaseless toil and honourable poverty tell their own tale. The Roman Catholic Church may well

feel proud of these her most devoted servants.

One morning Captain Robertson joined me ; the Father seemed pleased to see him. On my mentioning how kindly they had treated me, a stranger and a Protestant, he replied :

‘ Ay, ay, my lad ; they are different from most of the missionaries in Tonga, anyway, as many a shipwrecked sailor has found. If a ship were cast away, and the crew hadn’t a biscuit apiece to keep them from starving, they wouldn’t get so much as a piece of yam from some of the reverend gentlemen.’

I asked Father Chevron if he knew Captain Peese and Captain Hayston.

‘ Yes, I am acquainted with both ; of the latter I can only say that when I met him here I forgot all the bad reports I had heard about him. He cannot be the man he is reputed to be.’

I was sorry to part with the good Father when the time came to leave. But a native messenger arrived next day with a note from the captain, who intended sailing at daylight.

So I said farewell and went on board.

We called at Hapai and Vavau, the two other ports of the Friendly Islands, sighting the peak of Upolu, in the Navigators', three days after leaving the latter place.

We rounded the south-east point of Upolu next day, running in so close to the shore that we could see the natives walking on the beaches. Saw a whaleboat, manned by islanders and steered by a white man, shoot through an opening in the reef opposite Flupata. For him we tarried not, in spite of a signal, running in as we were with the wind dead aft, and at four o'clock in the afternoon anchored in Apia harbour, opposite the American consulate.

The scenery around Apia harbour is beauteous beyond description. Spacious bays unfold themselves as you approach, each revealing the silvery white-sanded beach fringed with cocoa-palms; stretching afar towards the hills lies undulating forest land chequered with the white houses of the planters. The harbour itself consists of a horse-shoe bay, extending from Matautu to Mullinu Point. Fronting the passage a mountain rears its summit cloud-enwrapped and half-hidden, narrow paths wind through deep gorges, amid which you catch here and there the sheen of a mountain-torrent. On the south the land heads in a graceful sweep to leeward, until lost in the all-enveloping sea-mists of the tropics, while the straggling town, white-walled, reed-roofed, peeps through a dark-green grove of the bananas and cocoa-palms which fringe the beach.

At this precise period I paid but little attention to the beauties of Apia, for in a canoe paddled by a Samoan boy sat my friend George. I hailed him; what a look of joy and surprise rippled over his dark countenance as he recognised me! With a few strokes of the paddle the canoe shot alongside and he sprang on deck.

‘I knew you would come,’ he said; ‘I boarded every ship that put in here since I landed. Going to live here?’

‘I think so, George! I have some money and trade with me; if I get a chance I’ll start somewhere in Samoa.’

He was delighted, and said I would make plenty of money by and by. He wouldn’t hear of my going to an hotel. I must come with him. He had a Samoan wife at Lellepa, a village about a mile from Apia on the Matautu side.

It was dark when we landed. As we

walked towards his home George pointed out a house standing back from the beach, which, he said, belonged to Captain Hayston.

That personage had just left Samoa, and was now cruising in the Line Islands, where he had a number of traders. He was expected back in two months. A short time before I arrived, the American gunboat *Narraganset* had suddenly put in an appearance in Apia where Hayston's brig was lying. Her anchor had barely sounded bottom before an armed boat's crew left her side, boarded, took Hayston prisoner, and kept possession of the *Lconora*.

There was wild excitement that day in Apia. Many of the residents had a strong liking for Hayston and expressed sympathy for him. Others, particularly the German element, were jubilant, and expressed a hope that he would be taken to America in irons.

The captain of the *Narraganset* then notified his seizure to the foreign consuls, and solicited evidence regarding alleged acts of piracy and kidnapping. During this time Hayston was, so the Americans stated, in close confinement on board the man-of-war, but it was the general opinion that he was treated more as a guest than a prisoner. The trial came on at the stated time, but resulted in his acquittal. Either the witnesses were unreliable or afraid of vengeance, for nothing of a criminal nature could be elicited from them. Hayston was then conducted back to his brig, and in half an hour he had 'dressed ship' in honour of the event. The next act was to give his crew liberty—when those bright particular stars sallied forth on shore, all more or less drunk, in company with the blue-jackets from the man-of-war, and immediately set about 'painting the town red,' and looking

for the witnesses who had testified against their commander. On the next night Hayston gave a ball to the officers, and, doubtless, from that time felt his position secure, as far as danger from war-ships of his own country was concerned.

All this was told to me by George as we walked along the track to his house, where we arrived just in time for a good supper. The place was better built than the ordinary native houses. The floor was covered with handsome clean mats, on which, in the far end of the room, his wife and two daughters by a former marriage were sitting. They seemed so delighted at the idea of having me to live with them, that in a few minutes I felt quite at home. The evening meal was ready on the mats; the smell of roast pork and bread-fruit whetted my appetite amazingly; nor was it appeased until George and his wife had

helped me to food enough to satisfy a boarding-school.

After supper the family gathered round the lamp which was placed in the middle of the room. There they went through the evening prayers; a hymn was sung, after which a chapter was read from a Samoan Testament, followed by a prayer from the master of the house.

I found that the custom of morning and evening prayers was never neglected in any Samoan household; for, whether the Samoans are really religious or no, they keep up a better semblance of it than many who have whiter skins.

That night George, who by the way was called Tuluia by his wife and daughters, made plans for our future. As we sat talking the others retired to a far corner, where they sat watching us, their big dark eyes dilated with interest. We agreed to buy a

boat between us and make trading trips to the windward port as far as Aleipata. Then after smoking a number of 'salui' or native cigarettes, we turned in.

All next day we were incommoded by crowds of inquisitive visitors, who came to have a look at me and learn why I had come to Samoa. George, having told them merely that I was his 'uo,' or friend, treated most of them with scant courtesy, explaining that the natives about Apia are thorough loafers and beggars, and warning me not to sell any of them my 'trade' unless I received cash in return. In the afternoon I landed my effects, but could scarcely get into the house for the crowds.

George's wife, it appeared, had been so indiscreet as to tell some of her relations that I had rifles for sale; as a consequence there were fully a hundred men eager to see them. Some had money, others wanted

credit, others desired loose powder, and kept pointing to a shed close by, saying, 'Panla pana fanua' (powder for the cannon). I discovered that under the shed lay a big gun which Patiole and Asi, two chiefs, had bought from Captain Hayston for six hundred dollars, but had run out of ammunition.

I had no powder to sell, but George found me a cash buyer for one of my Winchesters at seventy-five dollars. I could have sold the other three for sixty dollars each, but he advised me to keep them in order to get a better price up the coast. It was just on the eve of the second native war, so the Samoans were buying arms in large quantities. From some Californians' trading vessels they had bought about three hundred breech-loaders, and Hayston had sold them the cannon aforesaid, which he had brought from China in the *Leonora*.

The chief, Malietoa, had an idea of

carrying the war into the enemy's country. His plan was to charter a vessel, and take five hundred men to Tuvali, the largest island in the group. Hayston had met a deputation of chiefs, and told them that for a thousand dollars he would land that number of Malietoa's warriors in any part of the group. Moreover, if they gave him ten dollars for every shot fired, he would land them under cover of four guns. But they were not to bring their arms, and were to arrange to have taumualuas, or native boats, to meet the brig off the coast and put them on board. This, he explained, was necessary to prevent the vessel being seized if they met a man-of-war, and so getting him into serious trouble.

The chiefs took this proposition in eagerly at first, but, on thinking it over, suspicions arose as to their reaching their destination safely; and, finally, after the

usual amount of fawning and flattering, in which every Samoan is an adept, they told Hayston that they could not raise sufficient money, and so the matter ended.

The following months of my sojourn in Samoa passed quickly. George and I bought a cutter in which we made several trips to the windward villages, whence we ran down to the little island of Manono, situated between Upolu and Savaii. There we did a good business, selling our trade for cash to the people of Manono, and buying a cargo of yams to take to Apia, to sell to the natives there, who were short of food owing to the outbreak of hostilities.

On our way up we took advantage of a westerly wind, and made the passage inside the reef, calling at the villages of Multifanna and Saleimoa—visiting even places with only a few houses nestling amongst the cocoa-palms.

We left Saleimoa at dusk, and although we were deeply laden, we made good way. Whilst at the village I heard that a large Norwegian ship laden with guano had put into Apia, having sprung a leak and run short of provisions ; also that there was not a yam to be had in the place. Our informant was a deserter from a man-of-war, living at Saleimoa. He had been tattooed, and was a thorough Samoan in appearance, but was anxious to get a passage to New Britain, being afraid to remain longer in his present quarters. He was known as 'Flash Jack,' and was held to be a desperate character. After a few drinks he became communicative, telling me certain things which he had better have kept to himself. He informed me that he intended to ship with Hayston, whose brig was expected daily with a hundred recruits for Goddeffroy and Sons' plantations. He advised me to

keep my yams until the *Lconora's* cargo of 'boys' arrived, as the Germans would pay me my own price for them, being short of food for their plantation labourers. In another few minutes Jack was drunk, and wanted to fight us, when two of his wives came on board, and after beating him with pieces of wood, carried him on shore and laid him in his bunk.

I determined, however, to take his advice about the yams, and was cogitating as to the price I should ask for them, when George, who was steering, called my attention to two 'taumualuas' full of men, paddling quickly in from sea through an opening in the reef.

Not apprehending danger, we kept on. Our boat was well known along the coast by the Tua Massaga or Malietoa faction, and we merely supposed that these boats were coming down from Apia to the leeward ports. It was a clear night ; George called

out the usual Samoan greeting, used when canoes meet at night. The next moment we saw them stop paddling, when, without a word of warning, we received a volley, the bullets striking the cutter in at least twenty places. How we escaped is a mystery. George got a cut on the shoulder from a piece of our saucepan, which was lying against the mast. It flew to pieces when struck, and I thought a shell had exploded.

Flinging ourselves flat on the deck, George called out to the canoes, which were now paddling quickly after us, and told them who we were, at the same time lowering our jib and foresail. The taumualuas dashed up, one on each side. Luckily some of the warriors instantly recognised us. They expressed great sorrow, and explained that they had mistaken us for a boat bringing up a war party from Savaii.

Every man was armed with a rifle,

mostly modelled on the German needle-gun, and as they were all in full fighting costume they had a striking and picturesque effect. After mutual expressions of regard and a general consumption of cigarettes, we gave them a bottle of grog to keep out the cold night air, sold them some cartridges from my own private stock, and with many a vociferous 'To Fa,' we sailed away, and left them in the passage waiting for the expected invaders.

CHAPTER IV

SAMOA TO MILLÉ

JUST as we parted from our warlike friends, who had so nearly put an end to our cruises, one of the chiefs sang out that a large brig, painted white, was out at sea beating up to Apia. Turning his information over in my mind, the conviction grew upon me that she must be Hayston's vessel, the *Leonora*. It proved to be correct, for as we ran past Mulinu Point we saw her entering the passage leading to the harbour. She was about a mile distant from us, but I could see that she was a beautifully-built vessel, and could well believe the tales of her extra-

ordinary speed. The Norwegian guano-man, an immense ship, the *Otto and Antoine*, was lying in the roadstead, and as the *Leonora* came to her moorings, we ran up between the two vessels and dropped anchor.

During the next few minutes I received no less than three different offers for our sixteen tons of yams. These I declined, and after waiting till I perceived that most of the shore visitors had left the brig, I took our dingey and pulled aboard.

Captain Hayston was below, and the Chinese steward conducted me into his presence. He looked at me steadily for a moment, as if trying to recall where he had seen me before, and then after my few words of explanation, gave me a hearty welcome to the South Seas.

Having told him how I came to visit Samoa, I offered him my yams, which he gladly purchased, paying me a good price

for them in United States gold coin. This transaction being concluded, he asked me to meet him next day, when we could have a good long chat, at the same time desiring me to keep secret the fact of our previous meeting. What his reasons were I never knew; but as he seemed anxious on this matter, I told him that I had seldom mentioned the circumstance, and to no one in Samoa, with the exception of my mate Tuluia. I had indeed made few other acquaintances.

Although I should much have liked to have had a look round the brig, I could see the Captain wished to get on shore, so after shaking hands with him I returned to our cutter, where, in a few minutes, the brig's longboat came alongside, and we set to work getting out the yams. Hayston paid me without demanding to have them weighed, and George's dark face was wreathed in smiles when I showed him the money. He

explained that two tons were very bad, and had they been seen by a purchaser would have been rejected.

Although only a Kanaka, George possessed true commercial instincts, and I felt sure he would grow rich.

The native war was now at its height, and the lines of the hostile party were so close to Matautu, the eastern part of Apia, that bullets were whistling over our heads all day long. The yam season being over, and the copra trade at a standstill, we gave up the cutter and settled for a while on shore. It was during this period that I was a constant visitor at the house of Mr. Lewis, the American Consul, where I generally found Hayston in company with Captain Edward Hamilton, the pilot, and another American, a whisky-loving, kava-drinking old salt, brimful of fun and good humour. He had been twenty years in Samoa, and was one of the

best linguists I ever met with ; was known to every native in the group, and had been several trips with Hayston to the north-west islands. He followed no known occupation, but devoted his time to idling and attending native dances.

Many a merry evening we spent together while the *Leonora* was recruiting, and I began to think Hayston was the most entertaining man I had ever met. He made no secret of some of his exploits, and in particular referred to the way in which he had beaten a certain German firm in the way of business, even breaking up their stations in the Line Islands. At that time these merchants had acquired a bad name for the underhand manner in which they had treated English and American traders ; and for any man to gain an advantage over them was looked upon as a meritorious action.

By many people who cherished animosity against Hayston I had been led at first to look upon him as a thorough-going pirate and a bloodthirsty ruffian. Yet here I found him, if not respected, at least deemed a fit associate for respectable men. Moreover, his word was considered as good security in business as another man's bond. I well remember the days when he used to visit me at Leliepa, and we amused ourselves with pistol practice. He was a wonderful shot, and his skill excited the loud applause of the native chiefs. One fat old fellow, known as Pulumakau (the bullock), begged him to spend a day now and then in the lines with the native forces, and exercise his skill upon the enemy.

One day he took me on board with him in order to show me over the brig. He intended to leave in a few days, and I remarked, as we were pulled on board, that

I should dearly like to have a trip with him some day.

He was silent for a minute, and then replied, 'No! I shall be glad enough of your company as my guest, as I have taken a fancy to you; but it will be better for you to keep clear of me.'

When we got on board I was struck with the beautiful order in which the vessel was kept, aloft and below; there was not a rope yarn out of place. Descending to the cabin I found it splendidly furnished for a vessel of her size.

The *Leonora* was 250 tons register, and had been built for the opium trade. During her career in Chinese seas she acquired the reputation of being the fastest vessel on the coast. She then carried eight guns. She had been several times attacked by pirates, who were invariably beaten off with loss. At the time of my visit she carried but one gun,

which stood on the main deck, Hayston having sold two others of the same calibre to the natives. But for this, as far as I could see, she had a most peaceful appearance.

On the main deck, just abaft the foc'sle, was a deck-house divided into compartments, forming the cook's galley and boats' crews' quarters, together with those belonging to the first and second mates. On the top of the house a whale-boat was carried, leaving room for two sentries to keep guard, a precaution which I afterwards found was, on certain occasions, highly necessary for the vessel's safety. The foc'sle was large, for she carried between twenty-five and thirty men. The thing that struck me most, however, was the bulkhead, which was loop-holed for rifles, so that if any disturbance took place in the forehold, which was sometimes filled with Kanaka labourers, the rebels could be shot down with ease and accuracy.

The most noticeable things about the gear were the topsails she carried, Cunningham's patent, in which there were no reef points. The topsail yards revolved, so that you could reef as much as you liked, and all the work could be done from the main deck by the down haul. Many captains dislike this patent, but it behaved splendidly on the *Leonora* for all that.

The crew, or most of them, were ashore, and only the second mate, the Chinese carpenter, the steward, and ship's boys were on board. The mate was a muscular Fijian half-caste named Bill Hicks, known as a fighting man all over Polynesia. A native girl, called Liva, was sitting on the main hatch making a bowl of kava.

‘Halloa! Liva,’ said the Captain, as we passed along the deck, ‘I thought you were married to one of the Dutch clerks at Goddeffroy’s?’

‘Avoe, lava, alii.’ ‘Quite true, Captain, but I’ve come to stay with Bill for a week.’

The Captain and second mate laughed, and next day I learned that Bill had gone to the clerk’s house at Matafele, the German quarter of the town, and though there were other Germans present, told Liva to pack up her clothes and come with him. She, nothing loth, did as he told her, and the Germans, seeing mischief in the half-caste’s eye, offered no opposition.

The departure of the *Leonora* took place a few days afterwards, and I accepted the position of supercargo in a ketch which the junior partner of one of the principal firms in Samoa wished to send to the Marshalls to be sold. I expressed my doubts of her seaworthiness for so long a voyage. However, he said there was no danger, as it would be a fine weather passage all the way through, adding that the king of Arnua, or Arrow-

smith's Island, had commissioned Captain Hayston to buy a vessel for him in Samoa.

I thought his proposition over, and next day stated my willingness to undertake the venture, the owners promising to put the vessel in repair as soon as possible. She was hauled up to the beach in front of the British consulate, where for the next few weeks carpenters were at work, patching up and covering her rotten bottom with a thick coating of chunam. Notwithstanding these precautions no one except old Tapoleni, the Dutch skipper, could be induced to take charge of her.

During the time she was on the beach I made a trip to the beautiful village of Tiavea, doing a week's trading and pigeon shooting. On my return I found the town in a high state of excitement owing to a succession of daring robberies of the various stores.

Strong suspicions were entertained with respect to a herculean American negro, known as Black Tom, who kept an extremely disorderly hotel where seamen were known to be enticed and robbed.

The old vessel was launched at last, and, to the manifest surprise of everybody, refrained from springing a leak. Things might easily have been worse; for what with the great age of her timber and the thickness of her hull the carpenters were barely able to make the copper hold.

Next day we took in our stores. I was surprised at the casks of beef, tins of biscuits, and quantities of other provisions put on board, and thought the owners extremely liberal. This favourable state of feeling lasted till we were well at sea, when I discovered all the beef to be bad, and the remainder of the stores unfit for any well-brought-up pig. When everything was

aboard the owners gave me the following document :—

APIA, 3rd December 187 .

DEAR SIR,—You will proceed to Millé, Mulgrave Island, for the purpose of selling the ketch *E. A. Wilson*. You will find Captain Hayston there waiting for you; so you will please consult with him, as he is acquainted with the parties who wish to purchase her. Try to obtain oil and copra to the amount of £500 for the vessel. Ship whatever produce you may get on board the *Leonora*, and get Captain Hayston to sign bills of lading. Do not sell the chronometer unless you get a good price for it. Sell the few things you take to the best advantage; none of the Samoans are to remain, but must come back to Apia. Have the ketch painted on your arrival at Millé. Wishing you a prosperous and speedy voyage.—We are, etc.,

BASCOM & Co.

I quote this letter *in extenso*, for later on it plays an important part in my narrative. Having carefully read it Mr. Bascom shook hands with me, wished me a pleasant voyage, and departed. I went aboard, the vessel being already hove short, and, as I thought, only waiting my arrival to sail.

Things looked much otherwise as I stepped on deck. The skipper was drunk and helpless. The decks were thronged with shore natives—men and women nearly all crying and half drunk, bidding farewell to one or other of the crew.

The mate, Jim Knowles, was a Tongan half-caste, who was afterwards hanged in Fiji for shooting Larsen, one of the Messrs. Goddeffroy's captains, dead on his own ship. He was the only sober man on board. He told me that one of Tapoleni's friends had come on board, and that she had been stowed away by that worthy, who swore that he would not leave her behind. To this Maa Maa I had a particular aversion, and always hated to see her come on board. She was ugly enough in all conscience, and had always been said to be the cause of quarrels and fights whenever the skipper took her on a trip. Taking Knowles with

me, we lugged her on deck screaming and biting. As she refused to get into a canoe, Knowles threw her overboard, where some sympathising friends picked her up.

Just as this incident terminated I received a note from the owners, telling me to delay the vessel's departure for half an hour. Wondering what was in the wind, I set about restoring order. I found a lot of liquor in the foc'sle, which I took aft and locked up. Then with Knowles' aid I succeeded in clearing the decks of the women and shore loafers, who were lying about in all stages of intoxication.

At eleven o'clock we saw two boats pulling off from the shore, and noticed armed Samoans among the crews. As they came alongside I saw seated in one of them the figures of Black Tom and his son Johnny, both heavily ironed. In the stern sat his Samoan wife, a woman named Musia. A

number of white residents were in charge of the lot, and I was informed that at an impromptu mass meeting, held that morning, it had been decided to expatriate Tom and his family for the good of the country ; they had seized this favourable opportunity of carrying their resolution into effect.

This was a pretty state of affairs. I need scarcely explain my indignation at having two such characters as Black Tom and his son foisted on me as passengers. I was about to get into a boat and let them carry their own prisoners away, when I was told that I could land him and his family at the first land we made. This would be Quiros Island, bearing N.N.W. from Apia.

‘All right, gentlemen,’ I replied ; ‘and as everybody here happens to be drunk, I’ll feel obliged if you will be good enough to lift the anchor and let us get away.’

Tom and his family were accordingly put

in the hold, and the new-comers, having got the anchor up, bade me farewell, chuckling at having rid themselves of Black Tom so cleverly. Whereupon they got into the boats and pulled ashore.

It was blowing stiffly as we ran through the passage, and certainly we presented a pretty spectacle, with our running gear all in disorder, and the crew drunk in the lee scuppers. I had the keys of the prisoners' irons, so giving the tiller to Knowles, I went below and liberated them.

'Tom,' I said, 'my instructions are to keep you in irons till we make the first land. Now, I've got nothing against you, but I don't want your company, and I consider I was served a shabby trick when they put you on board. I mean to be even with them. They said the first land. Now, I'll stand on this tack till midnight; then I'll put about and land you on the coast.'

The negro's bloodshot eyes showed blind fury when I first approached him, but his look softened as I spoke. He laughed, evidently enjoying my suggestion.

‘Thank you, sir, for taking the bracelets off us, but I don't care about landing in Samoa again, and I'll face the voyage with you. You're the first man that's spoke a kind word to me since I was rushed and tied in my own house—treated like a wild beast, and, by —! I'll do any mortal thing in this world for you.’

He then begged me not to land him at Quiros, but to let him remain on board until we met Captain Hayston, who, he was sure, would give him a trading station. I promised him this, and in return, being a splendid cook, he provided me during the remainder of the voyage with all sorts of sea delicacies.

I will not speak of the dangers of that wearisome voyage; the drunkenness that I

tried in vain to suppress ; the erratic course we made to our destination. The skipper sobered up every two or three days, took the sun, worked out the ship's position, and let me steer any course I liked. Then he would fly to his bottle of 'square-face,' until I thought it necessary to rouse him again in order to ascertain our whereabouts. At last, after a forty-two days' passage, we sighted the low-lying coral islands enclosing the spacious lagoon of Millé.

CHAPTER V

THE BRIG LEONORA

THE island of Millé is situated in the Radac or eastern portion of the Marshall group, discovered by a captain of that name in 1788. On the charts it bears the name of the Mulgrave Lagoon, and the reason is not far to seek. For the most part the islands of Polynesia are of volcanic origin, whilst the lagoons, which sometimes pass for islands, are exclusively of coral formation. The minute insects which form them build their submarine wall in a circle, which growing for ages, until it rises at low water above sea-level, gradually collects sand and debris, when it decomposes and becomes a solid.

Then comes a day when wandering coconuts float to it and take up their abode on its shores. Gradually a ring of land is formed, varying in width, covered with a wreath of palms, sheltering within its circumference a peaceful sea, into which access is attainable by scattered channels only.

The spot we had reached was of this description.

Day was breaking when we first sighted the tops of the cocoa-palms, and putting the ketch dead before the wind we ran down to the passage. On going aloft I was glad to see the spars of a vessel showing about three miles distant. As none of the crew had ever visited the place before, we lay to and fired a gun. In about half an hour we saw a boat pulling towards us, with a tall man standing up steering. It was Hayston. Jumping aboard he shook me warmly by the hand, and said, 'So you see we've

met again! What sort of passage did you have?’

I recounted our misfortunes, adding the information that the ketch leaked terribly.

‘Oh, that’s just like Bascom,’ he remarked. ‘He told me that he’d send her down as sound as a bell. I never had a chance of looking at her when she was on the beach at Apia, and I certainly thought he would act squarely with me. But we’ll talk business by and by.’

He now took command of the ketch, and brought us into the lagoon, where we dropped anchor in ten fathoms alongside the brig. I then formally handed over my vessel to him, and wished the king of Arnú joy of his bargain. After receiving full particulars of the voyage, he called the skipper aft.

‘Well, Captain Westendorf,’ he said, ‘you have most fortunately reached here safely, but more through good luck than good

management. I know you to be an experienced and capable navigator, so that had you attended to your duty you would have made Millé ten or fifteen days earlier. Now, you can go ashore and live with my trader till you get a passage back to Samoa, for I'll be hanged if I take you back. As for your crew, I don't want them either; you can take them with you or turn them adrift. The ketch I intend to leave here until I return from Ascension; but mark this,—*and you know me*,—don't attempt to board her during my absence; good day!

I felt sorry at seeing the good-natured 'Tapoleni' so humiliated; for with the exception of that one failing which has obscured brighter intellects, and which was the cause of all his troubles, he was a thoroughly honest old fellow.

Black Tom and his wife elected to remain at Millé until they found a suitable island on

which to open a trading station. They parted from me with many professions of gratitude which I think were sincere. He afterwards became a wealthy man. Such are fortune's vagaries in the islands; his son Johnny earnestly begged me to intercede with Captain Hayston on his account, and not to leave him on shore at Millé. I made the request, and the Captain told him to come aboard the *Leonora*.

During the afternoon Hayston and I went over the ketch in order to inspect the stores, gear, etc., when he asked me, now that my responsibility had ended, what were my intentions as to future movements. I told him I proposed to charter a native canoe for Arnu, there to await a passing vessel and a passage to Samoa. From this course, however, he dissuaded me, pointing out that I might have to stay there six months. He then offered me the position

of supercargo on his brig at a fair salary, pressing for an immediate answer.

Thinking it better to be earning money than leading a life of idleness among the natives, I consented. 'I accept your offer, Captain,' I said; 'but there is one thing I wish you to understand, I am coming with you, not for the sake of the pay, but because I don't want to loaf about the Marshall group like a beach-comber, and, moreover, I should like to visit the Carolines. I don't particularly want to return to Samoa, and if I see a place I like I'll start trading. Now, I am willing to do duty as supercargo, even without pay, but I won't lend a hand in any transaction that I don't like the look of. So at our first difference you can set me ashore.'

Hayston looked me straight in the face and held out his hand—'Well, now, that's a fair deal. I give you my word that I won't

ask you to join in anything doubtful. The traders round here are the greatest scoundrels unhung, and I have to treat them as they treat me. My books are in a bad state, and you'll find work enough putting them straight; but I'll be glad of your company aboard, even if you never do a hand's turn.' So the bargain was closed. I got my chest from the hold and sent it aboard the brig; the steward receiving instructions that I was to occupy the port side of the cabin. At dusk Hayston gave some of the crew liberty, and sent the rest with the mates to haul the ketch in and beach her as the tide was full. While he stood watching her from the brig's deck, he suddenly remarked that they were making a mess of it, and calling two boys to bring the dingey alongside, he was pulled in to the shore.

There was a number of young women on board, natives of the Kingsmill group, good-

looking, but wild in appearance. I was on deck and they were below, where I heard them laughing and talking, and saw they were seated on the lounge that ran round the cabin. They all seemed very merry over a game, much like 'knucklebones,' which they were playing with shells. A large canoe was bearing down on us from one of the islands in the lagoon, and just as she ran up in the wind ahead of us, allowing the topsail to drift down alongside, I heard a man's voice mingling with the girls'.

I was going forward to have a close look at the canoe, when I saw the Captain close alongside in the dingey. He had sailed out to the brig, having let the two boys remain on shore to assist at the ketch. Just as he stepped over the sail, the owner of the voice I had heard ran out of the cabin. Hayston gripped him by the arm, and I heard him

sing out, 'What, would you knife me?' The next minute the man was seized in the powerful arms, lifted high above his head, and then dashed upon the deck, where he lay perfectly still.

The Captain disappeared in the cabin, and running up I lifted the man's head. His back and neck seemed broken, and though I called loudly no one came from below. There were a lot of Arurai natives in the hold sleeping and smoking, but they took no notice of my calls, which, as I didn't know a word of their language, did not surprise me. The canoe had now come alongside, and the Captain reappeared upon deck. The chief seemed pleased to see him, and then a lot of natives clambered on board and carried the wounded man aboard their bark.

Having given them eight or ten pounds of tobacco, Hayston told them, partly in

English and partly in the Millé dialect, that the man was shamming dead, and if he woke up on board they could chuck him overboard and let him swim. Then they hoisted sail again and stood away.

I felt horrified, for, although the Captain was certainly justified in defending himself from a man armed with a knife, I was shocked at witnessing the result. He, however, insisted that the fellow was only 'fox-ing,' and so the matter ended. When the boats returned from the ketch, I heard the women remark to the sailors that Siāké (Jack) had run away in a canoe, because 'Kaptin' had beat him.

At daylight next morning we got under weigh, and I was astonished at the manner in which Hayston handled the brig through the narrow passage. After accomplishing this feat, we bore away for Ujillong, and the steward called us to breakfast.

Our destination was the almost unknown chain of coral islets forming Ujillong or Providence Island. Some fifteen months previously, Hayston had discovered a passage through the reef there, and sailed his brig in. He was delighted with the security afforded by the magnificent lagoon inside. The islets were covered with cocoa-nuts, and he at once decided upon forming a principal trading station there, making it a centre from whence he could work the islands in the North Pacific. There were only thirty natives on the whole lagoon, and with these he succeeded in establishing friendly relations, setting them to work in erecting dwelling-houses and oil-sheds.

We left in charge two white men named Jerry Jackson and Whistling Bill, together with a number of Line Island natives who were to assist in making oil. Hayston told me he intended to settle there himself and cruise among the Carolines and Marshalls,

whilst Captain Peese, his colleague, would run a small vessel to China, making Ujillong his headquarters. On this occasion he expected to find that a large quantity of oil had been made in his absence, and was anxious to get there as quickly as possible.

During the day I had leisure to observe the crew, and considering that none of them were white men, the way in which the brig was worked was simply admirable. They treated the officers with great freedom of manner, but before the Captain they seemed absolutely to cower. There being some thirty of them, they were by no means overworked. They were allowed as much liquor as they chose to buy at a dollar a bottle for gin, beer at fifty cents, and rum at a dollar. With such license one would naturally think that insubordination would be rife. It was not so. But though they never broke out at sea, when once the brig anchored they be-

came fiends incarnate. Gambling and drinking then commenced. The sounds of oaths, yells, and blows floated up from the foc'sle, mingling with the screams of the women, and the night was made horrible with their din.

Individual members of the crew of this strange vessel I shall describe later on—for the present *place aux dames*! Every officer had a native wife, and the Chinese carpenter two. Most of these women were natives of Arurai or Hope Island, one of the Kingsmill group. They were darker in complexion than the other Polynesians, and prone to violent jealousy of their protectors. It was by no means uncommon to see two of these girls fighting like demons on the main deck with their national weapons, wooden daggers set round with shark's teeth, while blood poured in streams from their lacerated limbs and bodies. There were several girls from Ocean and Pleasant

Island, near the equator. Very good-looking were these last, and fair as to complexion. The principal belle, whose name was Nellie, was a very handsome half-caste—a native of Hope Island. Her father, a deserter from a whaler, had acquired such influence with the natives that they made him a war chief. He led them when they cut off an American whaler and killed the whole crew. Discarding civilised clothing, he became a native in all but colour, and finally met his death in a skirmish with a hostile tribe. This girl was his daughter, and had been given as a present to Hayston by the King of Arurai. Along with her beauty she had a violent and dangerous temper, and was never backward in using her knife on any woman that provoked her.

We had merely dropped Millé astern of us, when Hayston changed his mind about going to Arurai, and bore away to Pleasant Island.

He told me that he had forgotten a promise made to the traders there to bring them supplies, but that he would call at Providence on our way back from the Carolines.

Pleasant Island (or Naura) is generally considered one of the Gilbert group, although it is far to the leeward, and the natives, together with those of Ocean Island (or Paanup), consider themselves a distinct people. The former island is in latitude $0^{\circ} 25' S.$, longitude $167^{\circ} 5' E.$, and the latter in latitude $0^{\circ} 505'$, longitude $169^{\circ} 30' E.$

'We've got a bully breeze,' said the Captain; 'and there is a straight run of five hundred miles before we sight the cocoa-nuts on Pleasant Island. I'll show you what the *Leonora* can do.'

Our course was something about S.W. by W., the wind increasing in strength as we put the helm up for Pleasant Island, and during the afternoon, so quickly was the brig slipping

through the water, that Hayston said we should do the distance—four hundred and ninety-five miles—in forty-eight hours. I was astonished at the rate we travelled, and the Captain himself seemed pleased. Calling the hands aft, he gave them a glass of grog all round, and told the women to go on the main deck and dance. This created considerable amusement, for as the brig was running dead before the wind, and occasionally giving rolls, the dancers losing their balance got some heavy falls into the scuppers, while the others laughed and enjoyed their misfortunes.

We ran up under the leeseide of the island just forty-four hours after leaving Millé, a trifle over eleven knots an hour. In a few minutes we were boarded by the traders, of whom there were six. They were certainly a rough lot. As each man lived under the protection of a particular chief, the island

being divided into six districts, there was the keenest business rivalry among them.

Hayston called them down below, when they were soon pretty well drunk.

They had plenty of dollars, and bought largely of arms and ammunition. I was employed, with the second mate, in getting up the guns, principally Snider rifles, from the lazarette. I called to them, one by one, to come and pick what they wanted; however, they seemed quite satisfied to let me give them what I liked.

The brig was standing off and on, close into the land, in charge of the boatswain, the mate being ill; Hayston was singing 'The Zouave,' and the traders were applauding uproariously, whilst two were dancing with Nellie and Sara, shouting and yelling like lunatics. The only one that was sober was a fine young fellow who seemed ill, and was supported by a native. This

young fellow paid me for the arms bought by his comrades, saying, 'They're all drunk now, and as I don't go in for that kind of thing myself, they've got me to do this business for them.' The man who was dancing with Sara had a bag of dollars in his hand, and as he waltzed round the cabin he kept swinging it about and striking the woodwork of the cabin.

Carl, the sick man, called out to him, 'I say, Ned, let me have that money now, I'm settling up for you.' Swinging the bag of dollars round, Ned sent it full at liberty, and struck Carl in the chest, knocking him down. I picked him up, and thought by the pallor of his face that he was either killed or seriously injured.

The native who was with him called to some of his comrades, and a young woman came down and took his head in her lap, while I got a decanter of water. After a

while he came round, and told me he was not much hurt, but that the bag of money was heavy and had bruised his chest greatly.

‘You dog,’ he said, getting up and walking over to the other man, who was now sitting at the table talking to the Captain, ‘as sure as my name’s Carl I’ll make you suffer for this.’

‘Come, come,’ said Hayston, ‘it was only Ned’s rough play. I don’t think he meant to hurt you. Besides, I don’t want to see white men fighting on board my ship.’

‘Look here, Captain,’ said he, pulling off his shirt, ‘look at my body, and tell me if Ned thought me a fit subject for a joke.’

It makes me shudder now. There was an awful gash on his back, extending from his right shoulder to below the ribs on the right side. It was roughly sewn up here and there, and seemed to be healing, but the blow on the chest had made it bleed anew ;

a dark stream was soaking down his leg to the ground.

‘By heaven! that is a terrible cut,’ said the Captain; ‘how in thunder did you get mauled like that?’

Carl, who was still very faint, told us that some time ago he had a fight with a native, and licked him. One night, as he was lying face downward on his mat, this man crept into his hut and struck him with a shark tooth sword. His native wife, who was coming into the house at the time, carrying two shells of toddy, dropped them, and flinging her arms round the man’s legs, tripped him up, and held him, while Carl, all smothered in blood, shot him dead with his revolver.

‘Ned!’ said the Captain gravely, when Carl’s tale was told, ‘did you know this young fellow had this gash in his back when you hove the bag at him?’

‘Of course I did! why, d—n him, can’t he take a joke? Naura’s a rough shop for a man that can’t stand a bit of fun.’

‘Put up your hands, you cowardly dog!’ said the Captain, and in an instant the drunken traders cleared a space. ‘I’ll teach you to hurt a wounded man.’

Ned was as big a man as the Captain, and seemed to be the leading spirit of the gang. But the other traders, though armed with navy revolvers and derringers, did not seem inclined to interfere.

At the first round the big trader went down like a bullock, and lay on the cabin floor apparently lifeless. Hayston was like a mad animal when he tried to get him up, and the man fell helpless. Picking him up in his arms like a child, he carried him on deck, the rest of us following.

‘Here! Naura men, where’s Ned’s boat?’ he called out.

It was towing astern, and some one having hauled it up, Hayston dropped the man into it like a log of wood.

Then his good temper returned instantly, and he paid Carl every attention, insisting on dressing his wound. We remained out by Pleasant Island all day, and shipped a lot of oil, for which Hayston paid the traders in arms and ammunition; we then stood away for Ocean Island.

I learned that Carl had been a petty officer on board the U.S. cruiser *Wish-ton-wish*, but had deserted and made his way to Pleasant Island. He seemed superior to his companions in every way, and I was glad to be able to give him some books. He told me that he belonged to the New England States, but that he could never return, and would put a bullet through his head rather than be taken back a disgraced man. I bade him farewell with regret, and learned

two years afterwards that, a month after I saw him, he had blown his brains out, as the U.S. corvette *Rowena* touched at the island. Poor Carl! How many a tale of wasted life, of reckless deeds, and early death, could every island of the South Sea tell!

Although Hayston was an utterly reckless man in most matters, he was by no means foolhardy where the lives of others were concerned. During the time we spent at Pleasant Island every precaution was taken against a surprise. All the crew carried revolvers, and two men were posted in the fore and main-tops armed with Winchesters. The natives of this island had cut off many ships in past years, and were now so well armed and determined that the utmost caution was needed.

It was here that I met an American named Maule—about as hard a specimen of an old style South Sea trader as one could

fall across. He was extremely anxious that I should purchase two native girls from him. They were under his charge. It seems their father had been killed, and his own wife objected to their presence in his house.

I told him that I was supercargo, and therefore could not speculate on my own account. Besides, that sort of traffic was entirely out of my line. If he had curios, weapons, or Naura gods, I would deal, but there I drew the line.

‘Well, blame my cats! if you ain’t too disgustin’ partickler! Want to stuff yer cabin with kyurosites and graven images, instead of dellikit young women. Now, lookee hyar—jest you take them two gals o’ mine for thirty dollars, and you’ll jest double your money from King Abinoka. He’s jest mad after Naura girls, and buys ’em up by the dozen.’

Finding that I wouldn’t invest, he tried

the Captain, telling him that the girls were anxious to get away from Pleasant Island, as their father was dead, and having no brothers, they could not get food enough from the people. His wife was jealous too, and had beaten them.

‘Well, well!’ said the Captain, ‘bring them aboard, and I’ll give them a passage somewhere. I suppose by and by you’ll tell some man-of-war captain that I stole them.’ So the trader sent them on board, and received in exchange some boats’ gear and a keg of molasses.

The girls went aft, and remained with the others in the cabin for a few days. When we sighted Ocean Island, Hayston called me on deck, and said, ‘Come and see a bit of fun.’

Old Mary was told to bring up her flock. The two Pleasant Island girls came up with the rest. They were about fourteen and

fifteen years of age, and, from their close similarity, probably the children of the same mother—a somewhat unusual thing in the Gilbert group. They seemed frightened at being called up, and clung closely to Sara and Nellie. Their hair, Pleasant Island fashion, hung down straight upon their backs, and was carefully oiled and combed. A girdle of Pandanus leaf was their only garment. Speaking kindly to them, the Captain asked them if they would like to go ashore there and live. I give the conversation.

Captain.—‘ Well, will you go ashore here ? ’

Girls.—‘ Are there plenty of cocoa-nuts and fish ? ’

Captain.—‘ Pretty fair ; but there are not always plenty.’

Girls.—‘ What chiefs will take us and give us food ? ’

Captain.—‘ I don’t know—there are more

women there than men. All the young men have gone away in whale-ships.'

Girls.—'That's bad; the Ocean Island women will soon kill us strangers.'

Captain.—'Most likely. Would you like to stay on the ship if I get you husbands?'

Girls.—'Yes; where are they?'

Captain.—'Boatswain, send Sunday and boy George here.'

These were two boys who had been sailing with Hayston for some years. Both were about sixteen. Of George I will speak later on. Having come aft, the Captain, addressing them, said he was pleased at their steadiness, and as a reward for their good conduct, he had at great expense procured them wives, whom he hoped they would treat well. His speech was a humorous one, and the crew standing round grinned approvingly—Sunday and boy George being, apparently, looked upon as lucky youths, for

the girls were undeniably good-looking. In fact, I never saw an ill-looking Pleasant Islander.

‘Now, Terau and N’jilong, you must draw lots for first pick. Carpenter, bring me two splinters of wood.’

They were instructed by the other native girls how to draw lots, the result being that Terau picked boy George, and her sister took Sunday.

‘Steward,’ commanded Hayston, ‘bring up a couple of bottles of grog. And you, Sunday and boy George, before you begin your married life just listen to me. Call all hands aft.’

The crew came aft, and the Captain, who now seemed quite serious, said, ‘Now, boys, I have given these girls to Sunday and boy George. Don’t let me hear of any one attempting to interfere with them, and if one of you puts his head into the boys’ house

while the girls are there alone, I'll make it warm for him. There's a couple of bottles of grog for the watch to drink their healths, and the steward has two more for the watch below. For'ard now, and you, boys, go and ask the supercargo for some cloth to rig your girls out with.'

The *Leonora* was certainly a very sociable and domesticated ship.

We lay off and on at Ocean Island for a day or two, and engaged twenty-seven natives to proceed to Ponapé (Ascension Island) to work for Cappelle and Milne, a German firm. Then we made an easterly course to Taputanea (or Drummond Island), one of the Gilbert group, where Hayston had a trader.

The Drummond Islanders are notorious throughout the Pacific for treachery and ferocity. They frequently cut off vessels, and murder all hands, being led on

these occasions by renegade white men. When Commodore White's ships visited this spot in 1842 they murdered one of his seamen. A fight ensued, in which many were killed, and the town of Utiroa was laid in ashes. But the lesson had no great effect, and Hayston told me that they would not hesitate to attempt the capture of any vessel that could not make a good resistance.

We sighted the island at night-time, and lay off Utiroa till daylight. Then after putting the brig in a state of defence, and giving the command to the Fiji half-caste, Bill, telling him also to shoot a certain native if he saw him come alongside, Hayston had the longboat and whaleboat lowered.

Into the former he put a great quantity of trade, principally gin, rum, and firearms, giving me charge of the latter to cover him. I had six men with me, each armed with a Vetterlich rifle, and I carried my own Win-

chester—eighteen shot. Hayston gave me full instructions how to act if he was attacked; then we made for the town of Utiroa, the boats keeping alongside of each other. As we were pulling Hayston told me that he wished to get ashore before the canoes left, in order to interview his trader Jim in the presence of the people. This fellow, it appeared, was a fighting man who had great influence over the Drummond Island natives, with whom bloodshed and murder were acts of everyday occurrence. He always aided them in their tribal fights, and evinced a partiality for taking life that had won their warmest admiration. Hayston had brought him from Ponapé, where he was the terror of the white men, swaggering about the ports of the island, and using his pistol on any one that resented his conduct. But he was a good trader for all that, and had been placed in this trust because no other

man could be found willing to risk his life among such a treacherous race.

Jim had not been installed a week at Utiroa, when a chief named Tabirau gave him one of his daughters for a wife, and was paid for her in trade according to custom. Shortly afterwards the girl ran home again, saying that the white man had beaten her for spoiling a razor.

Jim took his rifle, went to his father-in-law's house, and demanded the girl back. A number of natives followed up, anticipating that he would be killed, for Tabirau was a chief of note, not averse to the extermination of white men. As they expected, he refused to give up the girl unless Jim paid more trade, alleging that one of the muskets paid for her was no good. Without a moment's hesitation the trader shot him through the body, killing him instantly, and then clubbed the girl to death with the butt end of his rifle.

Instead of being murdered by the natives for this atrocious deed, he was looked upon as a hero, and all Tabirau's land, canoes, and property were made over to him. The people of Utiroa elected him to be their commercial ruler, refusing to sell oil or produce to any ship without his advice or consent. For a while his conduct had quite satisfied Hayston, until he learned that Jim had sold a lot of his oil to a Californian trader, boasting, besides, that Hayston dared not bring him to task for it.

It was now the Captain's intention to assert his authority, and break the trader's power over the natives. For this purpose he determined to meet him on shore, and let the natives see which was the better man.

As we approached the beach we saw fully five hundred natives assembled; all were armed, and many dressed in their thick armour of fibre, and wearing helmets of the

skin of the porcupine fish. There was great excitement among them, though many of them seemed glad to see Hayston, calling out 'Tiaka po, Kaptin' (How do you do). The main body, however, seemed ready to dispute our landing.

'Keep close up!' the Captain called out to me, 'and don't let any of them see your arms, but be ready to drop it into them the first shot that is fired. But, for God's sake, don't miss. That villain Jim, you see, isn't here, though; those fellows mean mischief. However, land I must, and will.' He then told the crew to run the boat on the beach, and standing up in the stern, called out to natives that he knew, pretending to see nothing unusual in their manner. At the moment that he stepped on the beach the whole body of natives formed in solid line in front of him, while hundreds of rifle muzzles were almost thrust in his face. He looked

steadily at them, and commenced to talk with his hands in his trousers pocket.

I forgot my instructions, and my crew seemed equally excited at the Captain's danger, for, without being told, they ran the whaleboat ashore and we all jumped out. The men in the other boat were standing up rifle in hand, and they followed us.

The Captain was speaking calmly to the natives, when he turned and saw me. 'For God's sake, go back to the boats,' he said, in a quiet tone; then raising his hand threateningly and roaring like a lion, he repeated the order in the Drummond Island dialect. I understood this hint, so we ran back, but kept our arms ready. Hayston's order to me seemed to have a good effect, for the fierce looks of the natives relaxed, and soon afterwards he called out that it was all right, and told me to give him two muskets and a box of tobacco out of the longboat. This was a

present for two of the principal chiefs, who now shook hands with him, saying that Jim was in his house, and had told them that if Captain Hayston put his foot inside he would shoot him. Our former opponents seemed pretty equally divided in their opinions. Half of them were eager to see the fight between Jim and the Captain, and the others were ready to massacre the whole of us if but a single act of hostility was committed on either side.

Hayston ordered me then to come with him, and asked the natives' permission to allow me to bring my Winchester, as I was frightened of them. The boats were shoved out, the crew being told to jump ashore if they heard any firing, and fight their way to Jim's house. As I joined the Captain on the beach he told me that the natives thought he meant to kill Jim, and that they had felt him all over to see if he had concealed any arms,

but that they seemed satisfied when they found none. I was astounded at his recklessness in not bringing weapons, and as we were escorted along the road by the natives, I told him that I had a derringer hidden among some tobacco in a canvas bag slung round my waist.

‘No, no!’ he said. ‘It will never do to see you give it to me now. Besides, I don’t want any shooting if I can help it. There are many of these natives who will be glad to see Jim’s power broken, and I want to get my hands on him before he puts a bullet into me. The rest is easy enough. If you see him taking a shot at me before I come up to him, you can use that rifle; but don’t kill him if you can help it, and don’t be alarmed about yourself. Take hold of this old nigger’s hand who is walking beside you and you’ll be all right. Just keep laughing and talking.’

After a long walk we got up to the trader's house, and here the natives made a halt. I was beginning to feel horribly scared, and wished we were on board the brig again. Presently we were told that Jim was inside, and would not come out because he was sick. Walking steadily forward the Captain advanced to within a few feet of the house, and called out, 'Well, this is a nice sort of welcome, Jim! Come out and show yourself.'

The door opened, and I could see that the place was filled with natives, all of whom carried guns and seemed much excited.

Then Jim made his appearance and walked slowly up to the Captain. He was a tall man, dressed in pyjamas, with two navy revolvers in his belt. With his heavy red moustache and bloodshot eyes, he looked his character well—that of an unscrupulous and remorseless ruffian. Hayston had seated

himself on a fallen cocoa-nut tree with his hands full of papers.

‘How d’ye do, Jim?’ he said, extending his hand to the trader and rising as he spoke. The moment the trader’s hand touched his, he seized him by the throat and shook him like a dog shaking a rat; then spun him round violently and threw him against the stern of a canoe, where he lay half stunned. The natives gave a roar, but the Captain held up his hands—the tide seemed to turn at once in our favour, and one man went up to the trader, took away his pistols, and gave them to Hayston. The Captain addressed the principal chiefs, whom he told that Jim had robbed him, and that after he had made presents to the people, he intended to take the rest of the trade away.

We were moving into the house to take possession, when the trader, who had now recovered himself, got up and addressed the

natives. I did not understand what he said, but Hayston evidently did. The effect of Jim's harangue was to render the natives undecided as to what course to adopt. One man, who spoke good English and had a rifle with a sword bayonet attached, said it did not matter if any one was killed, but they thought their white man did not have fairplay.

'Jim,' said the Captain, in his smoothest tones, 'you say you can whip any man in the Pacific in four rounds. Well! now you have an opportunity to prove your words. If you are a better man than I am, I will let you keep what trade you have got, and shake hands afterwards.'

Jim stripped to the waist, and called for one of his women to bring him a pair of 'taka' or 'cinnet' sandals, as he was barefooted.

He was shaking with rage and excite-

ment, while Hayston showed no concern whatever. From the jump the trader forced the fighting, but in less time than I describe it, both of his eyes were nearly closed, and he had a terrific cut on his cheek-bone. Some women then ran in and begged the Captain to desist. I believe he could have killed his man in another five minutes. He asked Jim if he was satisfied and would shake hands. But the trader would not answer, and then the Captain's face grew dark. Seizing him again by the throat he nearly strangled him, his eyes protruding horribly as he worked his arms in the air. When he let him go he fell like a log. 'Carry him down to the boats and make him fast,' he said to the interpreter.

We entered his house unmolested, and I took an inventory of his goods. There was very little trade left, but the natives said he had a lot of money given him by the skipper

of the Californian vessel. This we found in a large soup and bouilli tin in his chest. It amounted to nearly seven hundred dollars, mostly in U.S. half-dollar coins.

The natives begged the Captain not to close the station up ; if Jim was going away, they wished some one in his place. He said he would consider their wish after he got on board ; but they must first help him to raft off twenty casks of oil that were lying in Jim's oil-shed.

We got off to the boats at last. The old man still kept hold of my left hand. This, the Captain had told me, he had done to protect me if any fighting took place ; that if fighting had resulted I would not have been killed, but would have been regarded as the old man's prize. The natives launched their canoes and followed the boats in swarms when we set sail for the brig. As soon as we got alongside, Hayston asked the second

mate if the native he had spoken of had shown up.

‘No,’ said Bill; ‘he’s gone away to Samoa—so they say here.’

Hayston seemed pleased at this news, telling me that this man was a special enemy of his, into whom he meant to put a bullet if he could drop across him. As he was gone away he was saved an unpleasant task. Jim was taken for’ard, and the carpenter was ordered to put him in irons; thereupon he sulkily explained that he didn’t intend to turn rusty.

‘All right, then, Jim,’ replied the Captain. ‘I’m glad we’re going to be friends again. But you can go ashore at Makin and stay there.’

He then called for a man among his crew to take Jim’s place on shore. After some hesitation a sturdy Rotumah native said he didn’t mind, if the Captain gave him a wife.

He couldn't speak the language, and if he took a Taputana woman she might plot to kill him and he be none the wiser.

'Boys!' called out the Captain, 'is any one of you willing to give Willie his wife? I'll make it up to him. Besides, there'll be plenty more going through the Marshall group.'

No one appeared struck with the idea. So the Captain called Sunday aft, and held brief conversation with him, after which the boy went into the deckhouse and brought out his wife and N'jilong. The poor girl shed a few tears at first and clung to Sunday's neck, but he finally induced her to go with Willie. She had come aboard almost naked, but went away with a well-filled chest and any amount of finery.

She parted from her sister in an apathetic manner, but her tears began to flow afresh when Sunday turned coolly from her and

pursued his duties on the deck. Savage though she might be, she felt the parting from the hardened young wretch whom she had come to look on as her partner. However, she lost nothing by the change. Her new husband was a steady, good fellow who treated her kindly. Years afterwards I met them both on one of the Ellice Islands and received a warm welcome. Willie had legally married her in Fiji, and they seemed a most affectionate couple, with children in whom their chief pride in life was centred.

CHAPTER VI

CAPTAIN BEN PEESE

FOR the next few weeks we cruised about among the islands of the Kingsmill and Gilbert groups collectively, known as the Line Islands. The most southerly of them is Arurai or Hope Island, in latitude $2^{\circ} 41'$ S., longitude 177° E.—the most northerly, Makin or Butaritu, in latitude $3^{\circ} 20'$, 45° N.

We did good business generally going through this group, and steady going trade it was, varied only by the mad drunken bouts and wild dances which took place when we were at anchor—these last beyond description.

Just then I was badly hurt fishing on shore one day. It was peculiarly a South Sea accident. I was standing on a jutting ledge of coral, holding my rod, when it suddenly broke off, allowing me to fall downwards on sharp edges, where I was terribly cut about the legs and body. The green or live coral has the property of making a festering wound whenever it pierces the true skin, and for weeks, with my unhealed wounds, I was nearly mad with pain. The Captain did all he could for me, having a netted hammock slung on deck, where I could see all that was going on. One day in a fit of pain I fell out and nearly cracked my skull. All the native girls on board were most kind and patient in nursing me. So the Captain said the least I could do was to marry one, if only out of gratitude and to brush away the flies.

Whatever some people might call these

poor girls they had at least one virtue, which, like charity, covereth a multitude of sins. Pity for any one in bodily pain they possessed in the highest degree. Many an hour did they sit beside me, bathing my aching head with a sponge and salt water—this last the universal and infallible cure.

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We called at Peru or Francis Island, where we obtained nine natives—five men and four young women. The islanders here are rude and insulting to all strangers not carrying arms, and almost as threatening as those of Taputana. I was, however, too ill to go on shore here.

After a two months' cruise through this group we bore away for Strong's Island, distant some five hundred miles. We had favourable winds, and the brig's speed was something wonderful. In thirty-eight hours we had covered a distance of four hundred

and ninety miles, when the lofty hills of this gem of the North Pacific, covered with brightest verdure, gladdened our eyes after the long, low-lying chains of islets and atolls of the Marshall and Kingsmill groups.

The brave 'north-east trade' that had borne us so gallantly along died away to a zephyr as we drew near the land, and saw once more the huge rollers thundering on the weather point of the island.

Calling first at Chabral harbour we did a little trading, and then sailed down the coast close to the shore—so deep runs the water—till we reached Utwé.

Here we found three American whalers put in for food and water. Hayston seemed anxious to get away, so, after exchanging courtesies with the skippers, we ran round to Coquille harbour, where we lay several days trading and painting ship. We cleared the harbour at daylight, with the sea as smooth

as glass and wind so light that the *Leonora* could scarcely stem the strong easterly current. Still keeping a north-west course, we sailed away over the summer sea while scarce a ripple broke its glassy surface, until we sighted Pingelap or M'Askill's, a hundred and fifty miles from Strong's Island.

These were discovered by Captain Musgrave, of the American whaler *Sugar Cane*, in 1793. They are densely covered with cocoa-palms, and though wholly of coral formation, are a good height above sea-level.

The Captain had a trader here named Sam Biggs—a weak-kneed, gin-drinking cockney. However such a character could have found his way to these almost unknown islands passed my comprehension! We ran in close to the village—so near that, the wind being light, we nearly drifted on to the beach, and lowered the starboard quarter boat to tow out again.

Whilst waiting for the trader I had a good look at the village, which I was surprised to hear contained 500 inhabitants. As, however, these islands—there are three of them, Takai, Tugula, and Pingelap—are wondrous fertile, they support their populations easily.

Presently the trader came off in a canoe, and, shambling along the deck, went down below to give in his report. He said that things were very bad. A few months back the American missionary brig *Morning Star* had called and prevailed on the king to allow two teachers to be landed. After making presents to the chiefs and principal men, they had got their promise to accept Christianity and to send the white man Biggs about his business. They had also told the natives that Captain Hayston was coming with the intention of carrying them off in bondage to work on the plantations in Samoa. Also that Mr. Morland, the chief

missionary, was now in Honolulu, begging for a man-of-war to come to Pingelap and fight Captain Hayston's ship with his big guns and sink her.

All South Sea Islanders are easily influenced. In a few hours after the teachers landed the whole village declared for Christianity, burned their idols, and renounced the devil and all his works, *i.e.* Captain Hayston and the brig *Leonora*.

The Captain's face darkened as he listened; then he asked the trader what he had done in the matter. The man, blinking his watery eyes, said he had done nothing; that he was afraid the natives would kill him, and asked to be taken away.

Jumping up from the table, Hayston grasped him by the collar, and asked me to look at him and say what he should do with such a white-livered hound, who would let one of the finest islands in the Pacific be

handed over to the sanctimonious pack on board the *Morning Star*, and let the best trading station he, Hayston, owned be ruined?

I suggested that he should be detained on board till we met the *Morning Star*, and then be given to Mr Morland to keep.

‘By ——! just the thing! But just let me tell you, you drunken hound, that when I picked you up a starving beach-comber in Ponapé, I thought you had at least enough sense to know that I am not a man to be trifled with. I was the first man to place a trader on Pingelap. I overcame the natives’ hostility, and made this one of the safest islands in the group for whale-ships to call at. Now I have lost a thousand dollars by your cowardice. So take this to remember it by.’

Then, holding him by one hand, he shook him like a rat, finally slinging him up the

companion way, and telling the men to tie him up.

‘Lower away the longboat,’ he roared. ‘I’ll teach the Pingelap gentry how to dance.’ I went with him, as I wanted to get some bananas and young cocoa-nuts. In five minutes we drew up on the beach.

The head-men of the island now came forward to meet the Captain, and to express their pleasure at seeing him. But he was not to be mollified, and sternly bade them follow him to the largest house in the town, where he would talk to them.

The boy Sunday, who was a native of Pingelap, came with us to act as interpreter. Behind the crowd of natives were the two Hawaiian teachers, dressed in white linen shirts and drill trousers. They had their wives with them, dressed in mixed European and native costume.

None of us had arms, nor did we think

them necessary. Hitherto these people had been slavish admirers of Hayston, and he assured me that he would reassert his former influence over them in ten minutes. The crowd swarmed into the council-house and sat down on their mats. The Captain remained standing.

His grand, imposing form, as he stood in the centre of the house and held up his hands for silence, seemed to awe them as would a demi-god, and murmurs of applause broke from them involuntarily.

‘Tell them, Sunday,’ he said, fixing his piercing blue eyes on the cowering forms of the two missionary teachers, ‘that I have come to talk peace, not to fight. Ask them who it was years ago, when the hurricane came and destroyed their houses and plantations—when their little ones were crying with hunger—that brought them to his ship and fed them? Have they forgotten who it was

that carried them to Ponapé, and there let them live on his land and fed them on his food till they grew tired of the strange land, and then brought them back to their homes again ?’

Sunday translated, and the silence was unbroken till the Captain resumed, ‘Did not the men of Pingelap say then that no man should be more to them than me—that no one else should place a white man here ? And now a strange ship comes, and the men of Pingelap have turned their faces from me ?’

A scene of wild excitement followed, the greater number crowding round the Captain, while with outstretched hands and bent heads they signified respect.

The two teachers were walking quickly away with their wives, when the Captain called them back, and in a pleasant voice invited them to come on board and see if there was anything there that they

would like their wives to have for a present.

Before returning on board Sunday told the Captain that the chiefs and people desired to express their sorrow at receiving the missionaries, and that they would be glad if he took them away.

Since the visit of the *Morning Star* an epidemic had broken out resembling measles, which had already carried off fifty or sixty of them. Already their superstitious fears led them to regard the sickness as a punishment for having broken their treaty with Hayston. So they offered us six young women as a present ; also ten large turtles, and humbly begged him to allow his trader to remain.

The Captain made answer that he did not want six young women—there were plenty on board already ; but he would take two, with the ten turtles, and ten thousand cocoa-

nuts. The said presents were then cheerfully handed over; the two girls and the turtles going off in the Captain's boat, while the cocoa-nuts were formed into a raft and floated alongside the ship.

While these weighty matters were being arranged I walked round to the weather side of the island with Sunday, who wanted to show me a pool in which the natives kept some captive turtle. On our way we came across some young boys and girls catching fish with a seine. They brought us some and lit a fire. We stayed about an hour with them, having great fun bathing in the surf.

Happening to look out to sea, I saw a big ship coming round the point under easy sail; from her rig and the number of boats she carried I knew her at once to be a whaler. We ran ashore and dressed, and as two of the children offered to show us a short cut through the forest to the village,

we ran all the way and got opposite the brig just in time to see the Captain leaving her side to board the whaler. I hailed the brig, and they sent me the dingey, in which I followed Hayston. She proved to be the *Josephine*, just out from Honolulu—a clean ship, not having taken a fish. The captain was a queer-looking old fellow dressed like a fisherman. He received us with civility, yet looked at the Captain curiously. His crew were all under arms. Each man had a musket, a lance, or a whaling spade—these two last very formidable weapons—in his hand.

Captain Long was candid, and admitted that as soon as he sighted our brig he had armed his men, for the wind was so light that he would have no chance of getting away. Hayston laughingly asked him if he thought the brig was a pirate.

The whaler replied, ‘Why, certainly.

Old Morland and Captain Melton told me two years ago that you sailed a brig with a crew of darned cut-throat niggers, and would take a ship if you wanted her, so I made up my mind to have a bit of shootin' if you boarded us.'

'Well, Captain Long,' said Hayston, in his easy, pleasant way, 'come over to my little vessel and see the pirate at home.'

The invitation was accepted, and as we pulled over amicably, the skipper cast an admiring glance at the graceful *Leonora* as she floated o'er the still, untroubled deep. As we stepped over the ship's side we were met by Bill Hicks, the second mate, whose savage countenance was illumined by a broad smile as he silently pointed to the queer entertainment before us.

'Great ancestral ghosts! d'ye carry a troupe of ackeribats aboard this hyar brig?' quoth the skipper, pointing to four undraped

figures capering about in the mad abandonment of a Hawaiian national dance.

The mate explained briefly that he had given the native teachers grog, after which nothing would satisfy them but to show the crew how they used to dance in Lakaina in the good old days. Their wives were also exhilarated, and having thrown off their European clothes, were dancing with more vigour than decorum to the music of an accordion and a violin. The Hope Island girl, Nellie, was seated in a boat we carried on deck playing the accordion, and with her were the rest of the girls laughing and clapping their hands at the antics of the dancers. The stalwart Portuguese, Antonio, was perched on the water-tank with his fiddle, and the rest of the crew who were not at work getting the cocoa-nuts on board were standing around encouraging the quartette by shouts and admiring remarks.

As the whaling skipper gazed with astonishment at the sight, Hayston said, 'Ay, there you see the Honolulu native teacher in his true colours. His Christianity is like ours—no better, no worse—to be put on and off like a garment. Once give a Sandwich Island missionary a taste of grog and his true instincts appear in despite of himself. There is *nothing* either of those men would not do now for a dollar ; and yet in a day or two they will put on their white shirts, and begin to preach again to these natives who are better men than themselves.'

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We went below, and after a glass of wine or two the skipper was about to leave, after promising to sell us some bolts of canvas, when the Chinese steward announced that they were fighting on deck. We ran up and saw Antonio and boy George struggling with knives in their hands. The Captain

caught Antonio a crack on the head, which sent him down very decisively, and then pitched George roughly into the boat with the girls, telling them to stop their infernal din. The two teachers' wives were then placed in old Mary's care below, and told to lie down and sleep.

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The two Pingelap girls who came on board were very young, and seemed frightened at their surroundings, wailing and moaning with fear, so Hayston gave them trinkets and sent them back to the chiefs, getting two immense turtles in exchange.

The wind now died away. All night the brig lay drifting on the glassy sea. At breakfast-time we were almost alongside of the whaler, and the two crews were exchanging sailors' courtesies when five or six whales hove in sight.

All was changed in a moment. Four

boats were lowered as if by magic from the whaler, and the crews were pulling like demons for the huge prizes.

The whales were travelling as quickly as the boats, but towards the ships, and in another quarter of an hour three of the boats got fast, the fourth boat also, but had to cut away again.

Our crew cheered the boats, and as there was no wind for the vessel to work up to the dead whales which were being towed up, I took the brig's longboat and six men to help the boats to get the whales alongside.

A breeze sprung up at noon, so after bidding good-bye to the whaler, we stood away for Ponapé, making W.N.W. We were ten days out from Pingelap before we sighted Ponapé's cloud-capped peaks. The wind was very light for the whole way, the brig having barely steerage way on her. Hayston was anxious to reach the island,

for there he expected to meet his partner, the notorious Captain Ben Peese.

Here he told me that if things went well with them they would make a fortune in a few years ; that he had bought Peese's schooner and sent him to Hong Kong with a load of oil to sell, arranging to meet him in Jakoits harbour in Ponapé on a day named. They were then to proceed to Providence Island, which was a dense grove of cocoa-nut trees. He was sanguine of filling two hundred and fifty casks now in the brig's hold with oil when we reached there.

Twenty miles from shore we spoke an American whale-ship from New London. She was 'trying out,' and signalled to send a boat. The Captain, taking me with him, went on board, when we were met by a pleasant, white-haired old man, Captain Allan.

His first words were, 'Well, Captain

Hayston, I have bad news. Peese has turned against you. He returned to Ponapé from China a week ago, and cleared out your two stations of everything of value. He had a big schooner called the *Vittoria*, and after gutting the stations, he told the chiefs at Kiti harbour that you had sent him for the cattle running there. He took them all away—thirty-six head.

The Captain said nothing. Turning away he looked at the brig, as if in thought, then asked Allan if he knew where Peese had gone.

‘To Manila; Peese has made friends there, and engaged with the Governor-General of the Philippines to supply the garrison with forty head of cattle. I knew the cattle were yours, and warned the chiefs not to let Peese take them away. But he threatened them with a visit from a Spanish man-of-war, and Miller backed him up.

He had a strong party with him to enforce his demands.'

'Thank you, Allan,' Hayston said very deliberately and calmly; 'I was half afraid something like this would happen, but I thought the man I took out of the slums of Shanghai and helped like a brother was the last person to have robbed me. It has shown me the folly of trusting any one. You are busy, Allan, so will leave you.'

Bidding adieu to the good skipper we stepped into our boat. Hayston was silent for ten minutes. Then he put his hand on my knee, and looking into my face with the expression I had never seen him wear since he fought the trader at Drummond Island, said, 'Hilary, did you ever know me to say I would do a thing and not do it?'

'No; but I have often wished you would *not* keep your word so strictly. Some day you will regret it.'

‘ Perhaps so. But listen to me. This man—this Peese—I found in Shanghai years ago, ill and starving. There was something in his face which roused my interest ; I took him on board my vessel and treated him as a brother. I was then high in favour with the Chinese authorities. Not as I am now—hunted from port to port—forced to take up this island life and associate with ruffians who would shoot and rob me if they did not fear me. I went to a mandarin—a man who knew the stuff I was made of, and what I had done in the Chinese service—and asked for preferment for Peese. It was done. In a week he was put in command of a transport, and with his commission in his hand he came aboard my ship and swore he would never forget who it was that had saved him. He spoke but the bare truth, for I tell you this man was dying—dying of starvation. Well ! it was

he who led me afterwards, by his insidious advice and by collusion with Portuguese coolie merchants, into risky dealings. At first all went well. We so used our positions in the Imperial service that we made over fifteen thousand dollars in three months, exclusive of the money used in bribing Chinese officials. The end came by and by, when I nearly lost my head in rescuing Peese from a gunboat in which he lay a prisoner. Anyhow I lost my rank, and the Viceroy issued a proclamation in the usual flowing language, depriving me of all honours previously conferred. We escaped, it is true, but China was closed to me for ever. Since then I have stood to Peese faithfully. Now, you see the result. He is a d—d clever fellow, and a good sailor, no doubt of that. But mind me when I say that I'll find him, if I beggar myself to do it. And when I find him, he dies!'

I said nothing. He could not well let such treachery and ingratitude pass, and Peese would deserve his fate. However, they never met. Peese, like Hayston, appeared to have his hand against every man, as every man had his hand against Peese.

He met his fate after this fashion :—

A daring act of piracy—seizing a Spanish revenue vessel under the very guns of a fort—and working her out to sea with sweeps, outlawed him. Caught at one of his old haunts in the Pelew Islands, he was heavily ironed and put on board the cruiser *Hernandez Pizarro*, for conveyance to Manila, to await trial.

One day he begged the officers of the corvette to allow him on deck as the heat was stifling. He was brought up and his leg-irons widened so that he could walk. Peese was always an exceedingly polite man.

He thanked the officers for their courtesy, and begged for a cigar.

This was given him, and he slowly walked the decks, dragging his clanking chains, but apparently enjoying the flavour of his cigar. Standing against a gun, he took a last look at the blue cloudless sky above him, and then quietly dropped overboard. The weight of his irons, of course, sank him 'deeper than plummet lies' . . . So, and in such manner, was the appropriate and befitting ending of Benjamin Peese, master mariner—'*Requiescat in pace!*'

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CHAPTER VII

CRUISING AMONG THE CAROLINES

OUR first port of call at Ponapé was Jakoits harbour. It was here we were to land some Line Islanders we had brought from various places in the Gilbert group. Hayston had brought them to the order of the firm of Johann Guldenstern and Sons of Hamburg, whose agents and managers at Ponapé were Messrs. Capelle and Milne. Their trading stations were at Jakoit Islands, where resided the manager of the business. The senior partner of the firm—a burly, bullying Scot—had for some time been carrying on a rather heated correspondence with Hayston,

whom he had accused of kidnapping the firm's traders. He had not as yet encountered the Captain, but had told various whaling skippers and others that if half a dozen good men would back him up, he would seize Hayston, and keep him prisoner till H.M. war-ships *Tuscarora* or *Jamestown* turned up.

Occasionally Hayston had by letter warned him to beware, as he was not a man to be trifled with. Talk and threats are easy when the enemy is distant; so Miller, during his cruising in the schooner *Matauta*, would exhibit to various traders the particular pistol he intended to use on Hayston. Representing a powerful firm, he had almost unlimited influence in Ponapé. Hayston told me that he believed Peese would never have dared to have looted his trading stations and taken his cattle if Miller had not sided with him.

‘Now,’ said the Captain, as we were slowly sailing into Jakoits, ‘I’m in a bit of a fix. I must let Miller come aboard and treat him civilly for a bit, or he will pretend he knows nothing of this consignment of natives I have for him. He lies easily, and may declare that he has received no instructions from Kleber, the manager at Samoa, to receive these niggers from me, much less pay for them. But once I have the cash in hand, or his firm’s draft, I mean to bring him up with a round turn.’

We dropped anchor in the lovely harbour, almost underneath the precipitous Jakoits Islands, on which were the trading stations. There were five whalers lying at anchor, having run in according to custom to get wood, water, and other necessities. One of these was a brig, the *Rameses* of Honolulu. Dismantled and deserted-looking—in a little secluded cove—she had not a soul on board

but the captain, and he was mad. Of him and his vessel later on.

A Yankee beach-comber of a pilot, named Joe Kelman, met us as we came in ; not that his services were required, but evidently for his own gratification, as he was bursting with news. As he pulled alongside the Captain told me that he was a creature of Miller's, and a thundering scoundrel on his own account as well. But he would settle it with him and his principal also in a few days.

With a countenance expressive of the deepest sorrow the beach-comber, as he sent glass after glass of grog down his throat, told his doleful tale. How Peese had come with a crew of murdering Spaniards, and played h—l with the 'Capting's' property ; stole every hoof of his cattle, but four which were now running at Kiti harbour ; how Capting Miller had been real cut up at

seeing Peese acting so piratical, and said that though he and Captain Hayston was sorter enemies, he thought Peese was blamed downright ongrateful,' etc.

'That's all right, Joe,' answered the Captain with the pleasantest laugh, 'that's only a stroke of bad luck for me. I bear Captain Miller no ill-will from the letters he has written me, and for this part—we are both hot-tempered men, and may have felt ourselves injured by each other's acts—as he tried to save my property, I shall be glad to meet him and thank him personally.'

'Well, that's suthinlike,' said the beach-comber; 'I'd be real sorry to see two such fine-lookin' men shootin' bullets into each other. Besides, pore Miller's sick. Guess I'll cut ashore now, Captain. Kin I take any message?'

Hayston said he would give him a few lines, and, sitting down, wrote a short but

polite note to Miller, stating that he had a number of labourers for him, which he would be glad to have inspected and landed. He regretted his illness, but would come ashore as soon as he (Miller) was well enough to receive him.

The beach-comber took the letter and went ashore. Hayston turned to me with a laugh : 'Do you see that? The gin-drinking scoundrel is playing pilot-fish. He has come to learn if I suspect anything of the game his master is playing. Here's a canoe ; you'll see I'll get the truth out of these natives.'

The canoe was paddled by a very old man and a boy. There were also a lot of young girls. The Captain declined to entertain visitors at present, there being too much work to do, and cross-examined the old man as to Miller and his men. He said there were no white men now at Jacoits ; further-

more, that when the *Leonora* was sighted, Miller had gone off to the four whale-ships and had a long talk with the captains. He had taken two guns from the *Scabreeze*, and loaded them as soon as he got ashore. The natives were told there was going to be a big fight; that Captain Miller had got sixty natives in his house, and the two guns placed in front of the landing-place. Hayston gave the old man a present, and suggested that he should dispose of his cargo to one of the whale-ships. The old fellow shook his head sadly, saying he had come too late.

Turning to me, the Captain said, 'There's news for you; Miller must have thought I meant to go for him as soon as we met, and has his people ready to give me a warm reception. If I had not these Kanakas on board I'd give him as much fighting as he cares for, and put a firestick in his station to finish up with.' A few minutes later we saw

a boat put off from Jacoits with a big burly man sitting in the stern. At the same time one of the whalers' boats came aboard, in which were the four captains. He greeted them warmly, and we all trooped below.

One of them, a wizened little man with a wonderful vocabulary of curses, said, looking at the others, 'Well, gentlemen, before we accept Captain Hayston's hospitality we ought to tell him that we lent Captain Miller two guns to sink this brig with.'

'Gentlemen,' said Hayston, standing at the head of his table, with his hands resting upon it, 'I know all about that, but you are none the less welcome. Miller will be here in a few minutes, and I must beg of you not to let him know that I have been informed of the warm reception he had prepared for me. Besides, they tell me he is ill.'

'Oh, h—I! Ill! That's curious; he

was in powerful good health an hour or two ago,' and the skippers looked at each other and winked. Presently we returned to the deck, just as the bluff personage of whom we were talking clambered up the ship's side and came aft.

The whaling captains and I watched the meeting with intense interest. Miller was evidently ill at ease, but seeing Hayston walking towards him with outstretched hand and a smile on his face, he made a great effort at self-command, and shook hands vigorously.

'Well, we've met at last, Captain Hayston, and ye see I'm no feared to come aboard and speak up till ye like a man.'

'My dear sir,' replied Hayston, grasping his hand with a prolonged shake, 'I was just telling these gentlemen how I regretted to hear of your illness, for, although we have carried on such a paper warfare, I'm con-

vinced that we only need to meet to become good friends.'

Here one of the American captains came up, and, looking the new-comer straight in the face, said, 'Well, I *am* surprised at meeting you here. Reckon you can sick and well quicker'n any man I ever come across.'

No notice was taken by Miller of this and other sarcastic remarks while he hurried on his business with Hayston. Much grog was drunk, and then the Captain passed the word for all hands to muster on deck—the crew to starboard, the Kanaka passengers on the port side.

The 'labour' was then inspected, and passed by their new proprietor, who, now very jovial and unsteady on his pins, took them on shore without delay. He returned shortly and paid for them in cash. Next morning several traders came on board, and

any amount of beach-combers, for Ponapé is their paradise. Mr. Miller came with an invitation to visit him on shore. Having business to attend to, I stayed on board, promising to follow later on. As Hayston was leaving the brig, Miller said, in presence of the traders :

‘ Eh, Captain Hayston, but ye’re no siccan a terrible crater as they mak’ ye oot. Man, I hae my doots if ye could pommel me so seväirly as ye’ve inseenuated.’

‘ Mr. Miller,’ said the Captain, stopping dead, and taking him by the shoulder, ‘ you are now on board my ship, and I will say nothing further than that if you have any doubt on the subject, I am perfectly willing, as soon as we reach your station, to convince you that you are mistaken.’

The traders, who had hitherto backed up their colleague, applauded loudly, evidently expecting Miller to take up the challenge.

He, however, preferred to treat it as a joke. I knew that the Captain was labouring under suppressed wrath, because he was so cool and polite. I knew, by the ring in his voice, that he meant mischief, and at any moment looked to see the hot blood surging to his brow, and his fierce nature assert itself.

About an hour later the mate of one of the whale-ships came on board to have dinner with me, and told me that Hayston had given Miller a terrible thrashing in his own house, in the presence of his backers and the American captains. It seems that Hayston led the conversation up to Captain Peese's recent visit, and then suddenly asked Miller if he had not told the natives that Captain Peese must take the cattle, and that he (Hayston) dared not show up in Ponapé again, or else he would long since have appeared on the scene.

Possibly Miller thought his only chance was to brazen it out, for, though he had a following of the lowest roughs and beach-combers, who were at that moment loafing about his house and grounds, and Hayston was unarmed, he could see by the coolness of the American captains that he could not count on their support. At last he said, with a forced laugh :

‘Come, let us have nae mair fule’s talk. We can be good friends pairsonally, if we would fain cut each other’s throats in business. I’ll make no secret of it, I did say so, and thocht I was playing a good joke on ye.’

‘So that’s your idea of a joke, is it?’ said Hayston grimly; ‘but now I must have mine, and as it takes a surgical operation to get one into a Scotchman’s brain, I’ll begin at once.’

He gave Miller a fearful knocking about there and then. The captains picked him

up senseless, with a head considerably altered for the worse. After which Hayston washed his hands, and went on board one of the whale-ships to dinner.

He then sent for the chiefs of the various districts, telling them to meet him at Miller and Lapelle's station on a certain day and hour. When they were all assembled, he induced Miller to say that he sincerely regretted having told them such lies, as he knew the cattle did belong to Captain Hayston. Finally they shook hands, and swore to be friends in future; Hayston, in a tone of solicitude, informing him that he would send him some arnica, as his head appeared very bad still. The parting scene must have been truly ludicrous. Shaking him warmly by the hand, Hayston said, 'Good-bye, old fellow; we've settled our little difficulty, and will be better friends in future. If I've lost cattle, I've gained a

friend.' Begging the favour of a kiss from the women present he then departed, full of honours and dignities; and in another hour we were sailing round the coast to Metalauia harbour.

Here we bought a quantity of hawkbill turtle shell. While it was being got on board, the Captain and I spent two days on shore exploring the mysterious ruins and ancient fortifications which render the island so deeply interesting; wonderful in size, Cyclopean in structure. It is a long-buried secret by whom and for what purpose they were erected. None remain to tell. 'Their memorial is perished with them.'

In one of the smaller islands on which those ruins are situated, Hayston told me that a Captain Williams, in 1836, had found over £10,000 worth of treasure. He himself believed that there were rich deposits in other localities not far distant.

To this end we explored a series of deathly cold dungeons, but found nothing except a heavy disc of a metal resembling copper several feet under ground.

This was lying with its face to the stone wall of the subterranean chamber—had lain there probably for centuries.

Its weight was nearly that of fifty pounds. It had three holes in the centre. We could form no idea as to its probable use or meaning. I was unwilling to part with it, however, and taking it on board, put it in my cabin.

While we were at Metalauia, Joe Keogh came on board, bringing with him three native girls from the Andema group, a cluster of large coral islands near the mainland, belonging to the three chiefs of the Kité district. He had gone forward, when the Captain saw him and called him aft.

He at once accused Joe of being treacher-

ous, telling him that the whaling captains had given him a written statement to the effect that he had taken a letter from Miller to the Mortlock group, where an American cruiser was surveying, asking the captain if he would take Hayston to California, as he (Miller) and Keogh would engage to entice him ashore and capture him if the cruiser was close at hand.

Not being able to deny the charge, Keogh was badly beaten, and sent away without the girls, who were taken aft. Like the Ponapé natives, they were very light-coloured, wearing a quantity of feather head-dress and other native finery. They agreed to remain on board during the cruise through the Caroline group, and were then to be landed at their own islands.

They were then sent to keep the steward company in the cabin, and put to making hats and mats, in which they excelled. At

Kité harbour we took on board the bull and three cows which Peese had not succeeded in catching. On returning to Jacoits harbour in a fortnight's time, I was told that I might take up my quarters on shore, while the cabin was redecorated. I therefore got a canoe and two natives, with which I amused myself in visiting the native village and pigeon-shooting.

One day I fell across a deserted whaling brig. Her crew had run away, and the ship having contracted debts, was seized by Miller and Lapelle. The captain alone was left. He was now ship-keeper, and his troubles had so preyed on his mind that he had become insane.

I watched him. It was a strange and weird spectacle ; there lay the vessel, silent, solitary — 'a painted ship upon a painted ocean.'

Her brooding inmate would sometimes pace the deck for hours with his arms

folded. Then would throw himself into a cane lounge, and fixing his eyes upon the sky, mutter and talk to himself.

At other times he would imagine that the ship was surrounded by whales, and rush wildly about the decks, calling on the officers to lower the boats. Not succeeding, he would in despair peer down the dark, deserted foc'sle, begging the crew to be men, and get out the boats.

We cruised now for some weeks to and fro among the lovely islands of the Caroline group, trading in turtle shell, of which we bought great quantities. What a halcyon time it was! There was a luxurious sense of dreamy repose, which seemed unreal from its very completeness.

The gliding bark, the summer sea, the lulling breeze, the careless, joyous children of nature among whom we lived. All were fairy-like in combination.

When one thought of the hard and anxious toilers of civilisation, from whom we had come out, I could fancy that we had reached the lotus-land of the ancients, and could well imagine a fixed unwillingness to return to a less idyllic life. Hayston was apparently in no hurry.

At any particular island that pleased him he would lie at anchor for days. Then we would explore the wondrous woods, and have glorious shooting trips on shore.

We met some truly strange and original characters in these waters—white men as well as natives. The former, often men of birth and culture, were completely lost to the world, to their former friends and kinsfolk.

Return? not they! Why should they go back? Here they had all things which are wont to satisfy man here below. A paradise of Eden-like beauty, amid which they wandered day by day all unheeding of the

morrow; food, houses, honours, wives, friends, kinsfolk, all provided for them in unstinted abundance, and certain continuity, by the guileless denizens of these fairy isles amid this charmed main. Why — why, indeed, should they leave the land of magical delights for the cold climate and still more glacial moral atmosphere of their native land, miscalled home?

Then, perhaps, in the former life beyond these crystal seas—where the boom of the surf upon the reef is not heard, and the whispering palm leaves never talk at midnight—some imprudence, some mistake at cards may have occurred, who knows! These things happen so easily.

The temptation of a moment—a lack of resolve at the fateful crisis—and they are so deadly difficult of reparation. Difficult—nay, impossible.

Where, then, can mortal find such an

asylum for weary body and restless soul as this land of Lethe? Where life is one long dream of bliss, and where death comes as a lingering friend rather than a swift executioner.

It added materially to my enjoyment of the whole adventure, that wherever we went we were always honoured personages, favoured guests. Everywhere the people had the greatest admiration for Hayston's personal qualities—his strength, his fearlessness, his prompt determination in the face of danger and difficulty. That his word was invariably law to them was fully evident.

One day, however, as a kind of drawback to all these satisfactions, I suddenly noticed that the girl Terau, who had been given to boy George, appeared to be very ill, if not dying. That young savage had obtained permission from the Captain to keep her on

board, although she was most anxious to get ashore at Ponapé.

She would often get into one of the boats and sit there all day—sad and silent—knitting a head-dress from the fibres of the banana plant. Not being able to talk to her myself, I got a native of Ocean Island, whose dialect resembled her own, to ask her if she was ill.

The girl made no answer. She covered her face with her hands. I then saw that every movement of her body gave her pain. At length she murmured something to the Ocean Islander, slowly took from her shoulders the mat which covered them, and looking at me, said, 'Teorti fra mati Terau' (George has nearly killed Terau). I was horrified to see that the poor girl's back was cut and swelled dreadfully. Her side, also, she said, was very bad, and it hurt her to breathe.

We lifted her carefully out of the boat, and carried her between us to the skylight, where we placed her in a comfortable position.

I found the Captain lying down, and asked him to come on deck, where, lifting the mat from the girl's bruised shoulders, I showed him the terrible state she was in.

‘Do you mean to allow such brutality to be practised on a poor girl? Why, I believe she is dying!’

He said nothing, except ‘Come below.’ Sitting down at the table, he said, ‘I will not punish that boy. But I would be glad if you will see him, and induce him to treat the girl kindly.’

I called George, who was in the deck-house playing cards, and asked him what he would take for Terau.

The lad thought for a moment, and asked me if the Captain had told me to come to him about her.

I said, 'Yes, he had.' But that I wanted him either to give or sell me the girl, adding that he had better be quick about it, as Terau seemed sinking fast.

'Oh! if that is so, you give me what you like for her. Don't want no dead girls 'bout me.'

I called up three of the crew as witnesses, whereupon George sold me the victim of his brutality for ten dollars and a German concertina.

'Now, George,' I said, 'I am going to put Terau ashore, and if you touch her again, or even speak to her, I'll knock your infernal soul out of your black body.'

He grinned, and replied that he was only too glad to get rid of her; and returning into the deck-house, began at once to play on the concertina.

A few days after this transaction we touched at Ngatik or Los Valientes Island,

and I was pleased to find here a trader whose wife was a native of Pleasant Island.

I asked them if they would like to have Terau to live with them, and the wife at once expressed her willingness as well as joy at seeing one of her own countrywomen.

Returning on board, I inquired of Terau if she would not like to go ashore and live with these people, who would treat her kindly. During my ownership she had regained her strength in great degree, Nellie having agreed to attend on her, and the Chinese steward saw that she had nourishing food.

She preferred to go ashore, being still afraid of George's ill-treatment; I did not tell her of the trader's wife being a countrywoman, trusting it would prove a joyful surprise. I was not mistaken. The two women rushed into each other's arms, and wept in their impulsive fashion. I felt cer-

tain that here poor Terau would receive kind treatment.

Before returning on board, the trader told me that Terau had related her story to them, and that the Ngatik women, who were in the house, told her to make the white man who had been so kind to her 'the present of poverty.' This ceremonial consisted in her cutting off her hair close to the head, and, together with an empty cocoa-nut shell and a small fish, offering it to me. The trader said this was to express her gratitude—the empty shell and small fish signifying poverty, while the gift of hair denoted that she was a bonds-woman to me for life.

I felt sorry that the poor child should have cut off her beautiful hair, which was tied round the centre with a band of pandanus leaf, and put in my hand ; but I felt a glow of pleasure at being able to place her with people who would be good to her ; and

thanking her for the gift, to which she added a thick plate of turtle shell, I said farewell, and returned to the brig.

The Captain called me below, and shook my hand.

‘I’m glad,’ he said, ‘that poor girl has left the ship; but I must repay you the money you gave George for her.’

This I refused to take. I felt well repaid by the unmistakable gratitude Terau had evinced towards me from the moment the Ocean Islander and I had carried her pain-racked form below.

CHAPTER VIII

POISONED ARROWS

THE weather had changed, and been cloudy and dull for several days. We were all rather in the doldrums too. We had been bearing eastward on the line. Suddenly Hayston said, 'Suppose we put in at Santa Cruz. We want the water-casks filled. I'm not very fond of the island, for all its name. Sacred names and bloodshed often go together with Spaniards. However, I know the harbour well, and the yams are first-rate.' So at daylight we bore up, at eight bells we entered the heads with both anchors bent to the chains, and at noon were beating up the

harbour. By two o'clock we cast anchor in thirty fathoms. Out came the canoes, and we soon began trading with the natives.

We kept pretty strict watch, however. The men, to my fancy, had a sullen expression, and the women, though not bad-looking, seemed as if it cost them an effort to look pleasant.

Our girls wouldn't have anything to say to them. Hope Island Nellie, in particular, said she'd like to shoot half of them; that they'd killed a cousin of hers, who was only scratched with a poisoned arrow, and that it was one of the Captain's mad tricks to go there at all.

However, Hayston, as usual, was spurred on by opposition to have his own way, and to do even more than he originally intended. He told me afterwards that he only wanted to get some yams in the harbour, and that

the water would have held out longer—until we got to a known safe island.

So on Sunday we sent two boats on shore, and got the casks filled with water immediately. Our provisions were taken out and examined. Trading with the natives went on merrily.

On Monday the weather was fine. We got a couple of rafts out with water, and laid in yams enough to last for the rest of our cruise. Hayston laughed, and said there was nothing like showing natives that you were not afraid of them. ‘Eh, Nellie? What you think now?’

‘Think Captain big fool,’ said Nellie, who was in a bad temper that morning. ‘Ha! you see boat crew; by God! man wounded—I see them carry him along.’

Sure enough, we could see the two boats’ crews coming down to the beach. They were carrying one man, while two supported

another, who seemed hardly able to walk. 'Get out the boats!' roared Hayston. 'I'll teach the scoundrels to touch a crew of mine.'

All was now bustle and commotion. Every man on the ship that could be spared, and Hope Island Nellie to boot, who had begged to be allowed to go with the attacking party, and whose ruffled temper was restored to equanimity by the chance of having a shot at her foes, and avenging her cousin's death. We left a boat's crew watch, and made for the shore, Nellie sitting in the bow of the Captain's boat with a Winchester rifle across her knees, and her eyes sparkling with a light I had never seen in a woman's face before. It was the light of battle come down through the veins of chiefs and warriors of her people for centuries uncounted.

We left a couple of men in each boat,

telling them to keep on and off until we returned ; the wounded men were carefully laid on mats in one of their own boats ; and forth we went—a light-hearted storming party, and attacked the town of the treacherous devils.

Hayston was in a frightful rage, cursing himself one moment for relaxing his usual caution, and devoting the Santa Cruz natives in the next to all the fiends of hell for their infernal causeless treachery. He raged up again and again to the cluster of huts, thickly built together with palisades here and there, which made excellent cover for shooting from, backed up by the green wall of the primeval forest. I could not but admire him as he stood there—grand, colossal, fearless, as though he bore a charmed life, while the deadly quivering arrows flew thick, and more than one man was hit severely. Only that our fire was

quick and deadly with the terrible Winchester repeaters, and that the savages—bold at first—were mowed down so quickly that they had to retreat to a distance which rendered their arrows powerless, we should have had a muster roll with gaps in it of some seriousness. Hayston was a splendid rifle shot, and for quick loading and firing had few equals. Every native that showed himself within range went down ere he could fit an arrow to his bowstring. And there was Hope Island Nellie by his side, firing nearly as fast, and laughing like a child at play whenever one of her shots told.

Then the arrows grew fewer. Just before they ceased I had fired at a tall native who had been conspicuous through the fight. He fell on his face. Nellie gave a shout, and loaded her own rifle on the chance of another shot, straining her bright and eager

eyes to see if another lurking form was near enough for danger. Well for me was it that she did so! Staggering to his feet, a wounded native fitted an arrow to his bow, and sent it straight for my breast before I could raise my gun to my shoulder. Nellie made a snap shot at him, and, either from exhaustion or the effect of her bullet, he fell prone and motionless.

I felt a scratch on my arm—bare to the shoulder—as if a forest twig had raised the skin. ‘Look!’ said Nellie, and her face changed. As she spoke, she passed her finger over the place, and showed it blood-stained. ‘The crawling brute’s arrow hit you there. Let me suck the poison. If you don’t’—as I made a gesture of dissent—‘you die, twel’ days.’

‘Don’t be a fool!’ said Hayston. ‘You’re a dead man if you don’t. As it is, you must run your chance. Some of these

fellows will lose the number of their mess, I'm sorry to say.'

So the girl, who had been but the moment before thirsting for blood, and firing into the mob of half-frightened, yet ferocious savages, pressed her soft lips on my arm, like a young mother soothing a babe, and with all womanly tenderness bound up the injured place, which had now begun to smart, and, to my excited imagination, commenced to throb from wrist to shoulder.

'Strange child, isn't she?' laughed Hayston. 'If she'd only been born white, and been to boarding-school down east, what a sensation she'd have created in a ball-room!'

'Better as she is, perhaps,' said I. 'She has lived her life with few limitations, and enjoyed most of it.'

The excited crew rushed in and finished every wounded man in a position to show

fight. Nellie did not join in this, but stood leaning on her rifle — *la belle sauvage*, if ever there was one—brave, beautiful, with a new expression like that of a roused lioness on her parted lips and blazing eyes.

As for Hayston, he was a fatalist by constitution and theory. ‘A man must die when his time comes,’ he had often said to me. ‘Until the hour of fate he cannot die. Why, then, should he waste his emotions by giving way to the meanest of all attributes—personal fear?’

He had none, at any rate. He would have walked up to the block without haste or reluctance, had beheading been the fashionable mode of execution in his day, chaffed his executioner, and with a bow and a smile for the handsomest woman among the spectators, quitted with easy grace a world which had afforded him a fair share of its rarest possessions.

By his order the town was fired and quickly reduced to ashes, thus destroying a number of articles—mats, utensils, wearing apparel, weapons, etc.—which, requiring, as they do, considerable skill and expenditure of time, are regarded as valuable effects by all savages.

The attack had been early in the day. We cut down as many cocoa-nut trees as we could, and finally departed for the ship, towing out with us a small fleet of canoes, to be broken up when we got to the brig. The sick men were sent below, and such remedies as we knew of were applied. They were—all but one—silent and downhearted. They knew by experience the sure and deadly effect of the poison manufactured among the Line Islands. Subtle and penetrating! But little hope of recovery remains.

About four o'clock next morning we

began to heave at the windlass, and got under weigh at eight. The wind was light and variable, and our progress slow. As we got abreast of the hostile village we gave them a broadside. But the sullen devils of Santa Cruz were not cowed yet. A second fleet of canoes swarmed around the ship. They made signals of submission and a desire to trade, but when they got near enough sent a cloud of arrows at the ship, many of which stuck quivering in the masts, though luckily no one was hit. Their yells and screams of wrath were like the tumult of a hive of demons. We were luckily well prepared, and we let them have the carronades over and over again, sinking a dozen of their canoes, and doing good execution among the crews when their black heads popped up like corks as they swam for the nearest canoes. While this took place we unbent the starboard chain, stowed

it and the anchor, and clearing the heads, bade adieu to the inhospitable isle.

On the next day all hands were engaged in cleaning our armoury, which it certainly appeared necessary to keep in good order. Hope Island Nellie polished her Winchester rifle till it shone again, besides showing an acquaintance with the machinery of the lock and repeating gear was nothing new to her.

‘You ought to make a notch in the stock for every man you kill, Nellie,’ said Hayston, as we were lying on the deck in the afternoon, while the *Leonora* was gliding on her course like the fair ocean bird that she was.

Nellie frowned. ‘No like that talk,’ she answered. ‘Might have to put ’nother notch yet for Nellie—who knows?’

‘Who knows, indeed, Nellie?’ answered the Captain. ‘None of us can foresee our fate,’ he added with a tinge of sadness,

which so often mingled with his apparently most careless moments. 'We don't even know who's going to die from those arrow scratches yet.'

Here the girl looked over at me. 'How you feel, Hil'ree?' she said, as her voice softened and lost its jesting tone.

'Feel good,' I said; 'think getting better.'

'You no know,' she answered gravely. 'You wait.' And she began to count. She went over the fingers of her small, delicately-formed left hand,—wonderful in shape are the hands and feet of some of these Island girls,—and after counting from little finger to thumb *twice*, touched the two first fingers, and looked up. 'How many?' she asked.

'Twelve,' I said; I had followed the counts with care, you may be sure.

'Twel' day, you see,' she said; 'perhaps you all right—perhaps'—and here she gave

a faint but accurate imitation of the dreadful shudder which precedes the unspeakable agonies of tetanus.

‘Nellie’s right,’ said Hayston; ‘keep up your spirits, for you won’t know till then whether you’re to go to sleep in your hammock in blue water or not.’

This was a cheerful prospect, but I had come through many perils, and missed the grim veteran by so many close shaves, that I had grown to be something of a fatalist like Hayston.

‘Well! if I go under it won’t be your fault, Nellie! So Captain, remember I make over to her all the stuff in my trade chest. Send any letters and papers to the address you know in Sydney, and a bank draft for what you will find in the dollar bag. Nellie will have some good dresses anyhow.’

‘Dress be hanged!’ quoth Nellie, who

was emphatic in her language sometimes. 'You go home to mother yet'; and she arose and left hurriedly. Poor Nellie!

In that day when we and others who have sinned, after fullest knowledge of good and evil 'know the right and yet the wrong pursue,' shall be arraigned for deeds done in the flesh, will the same doom be meted out to this frank, untaught child of Nature and her sisters? I trow not. I must say that for a day or two before the fated twelfth which Nellie so stoutly insisted upon, I felt slightly anxious. What an end to all one's hopes, longings, and glorious imaginings, to be racked with tortures indescribable before dying like a poisoned hound, all because of the instinctive, senseless act of a stupid savage!

To die young, too, with the world but opening before me! Life with its thousand

possibilities just unrolled! One's friends, too,—the weeping mother and sisters, whose grief would never wholly abate this side of time; the old man's fixed expression of sorrow. These thoughts passed through my brain, with others arising from and mingled with them, as I left my hammock early on the twelfth day. I dressed quickly, and going on deck, that daily miracle occurred—'the glorious sun uprist.'

The dawnlight now began to infuse the pearly rim, which, imperceptibly separating from the azure grey horizon, deepened as it touched the edge of the vast ocean plain. Faintly glimmering, how magically it transformed from a dim, neutral-tinted waste to an opaline clarity of hue—a fuller crimson. Then the wondrous golden globe heaved itself over the edge of our water-world all silently, and the day, the 19th of October, began its course.

Should I live to see its close?

How strange if all this time the subtle poison should have lurked in one's veins until the exact moment, when, like a modern engine of devilry—an infernal machine with a clock and apparatus—set to strike and detonate at a given and calculated hour, the death-stroke should sound!

We had breakfasted, and were lying on the deck chatting and reading, as the *Leonora* glided over the heaving bosom of the main—the sun shining—the sea-birds sailing athwart our course with outstretched, moveless wings—the sparkling waters reflecting a thousand prismatic colours, as the brig swiftly sped along her course—all nature gaily bright, joyous, and unheeding. Suddenly one of the wounded men, Henry Stephens by name, raised himself from his mat with a cry so wild

and unearthly that half the crew and people started to their feet.

‘My God!’ he exclaimed, as he sank down again upon his mat, ‘I’m a dead man—those infernal arrows.’

‘Poor Harry!’ said Nellie, who by this time was bending over him, ‘don’t give in—by and by better—you get down to bunk. Carry him down, you boys!’

Two of the crew lifted the poor fellow, who even as they raised him had another fearful paroxysm, drawing his frame together almost double, so that the men could scarcely retain their hold.

‘Carry him gently, boys!’ said Hayston; ‘go to the steward for some brandy and laudanum, that will ease the pain.’

‘And is there no cure—no means of stopping this awful agony?’

‘Not when tetanus once sets in,’ said Hayston; ‘it’s not the first case I’ve seen.’

The other man was quite a young fellow, and famed among us for his entire want of fear upon each and every occasion. He laughed and joked the whole time of the fight with the Santa Cruz islanders, said that every bullet had its billet, and that his time had not come. 'He believed,' he said, 'also that half the talk about death by poisoned arrows was fancy. Men got nervous, and frightened themselves to death.' He was not one of that sort anyhow. He had laughed and joked with both of us, and even now, when poor Harry Stephens was carried below, and we could hear his cries as the increasing torture of the paroxysms overcame his courage and self-control, he joked still.

The day was a sad one. Still the brig glided on through the azure waveless deep—still the tropic birds hung motionless above us—still the breeze whispered through our

swelling sails, until the soft, brief twilight of the tropic eve stole upon us, and the stars trembled one by one in the dusky azure, so soon to be 'thick inlaid with patines of bright gold.'

'Reckon I've euchred the bloodthirsty niggers this time,' said Dick, with a careless laugh, lighting his pipe as he spoke. 'This is "twelfth night." That's the end of the time the cussed poison takes to ripen, isn't it, Nellie?' he laughed. 'It regular puts me in mind of old Christmas days in England, and us schoolboys counting the days after the New Year! What a jolly time it was! Won't I be glad to see the snow, and the bare hedges, and the holly berries, and the village church again? Dashed if I don't stay there next time I get a chance, and cut this darned slaving, privateering life. I'll—oh! my God—ah—a—h!'

His voice, in spite of all his efforts, rose from a startled cry to a long piercing shriek, such as it curdled our blood to hear.

Hayston came up from the cabin, followed by Nellie and the other girls. All crowded round him in silence. They knew well at the first cry he was a doomed man.

‘Carry him down, lads!’ he said, as he laid his hands on his forehead and passed it quietly over his clustering hair—‘poor Dick! poor fellow!’ At this moment another frightful spasm shook the seaman’s frame, and scarcely could the men who had lifted him from the deck on which he had been lying control his tortured limbs. As they reached the lower deck another terrible cry reached our ears, while the continuous groaning of the poor fellow first attacked made a ghastly and awful accompaniment to the screams of the latest victim.

As for me, I walked forward and sat as near as I could get to the *Leonora's* bows, where I lit my pipe and awaited the moment in which only too probably my own summons would come in a like pang of excruciating agony. The gleaming phosphorescent wavelets of that calm sea fell in broken fire from the vessel's side, while the hissing, splashing sound deadened the recurring shrieks of the doomed sufferers, and soothed my excited nerves.

Now that death was so near, in such a truly awful shape, I began seriously to reflect upon the imprudence, nay, more, the inexcusable folly of continuing a life exposed to such terrible hazards.

If my life was spared I would resolve, like poor Dick, to stay at home in future. The resolution might avail me as little as it had done in his case.

As I sat hour after hour gazing into the

endless shadow and gleam of the great deep, a strange feeling of peace and resignation seemed to pass suddenly over my troubled spirit. I felt almost tempted to plunge beneath the calm bosom of the main, and so end for aye the doubt, the fear, the rapture, and despair of this mysterious human life. All suddenly the moon rose, sending before her a brilliant pathway, adown which, in my excited imagination, angels might glide, bearing messages of pardon or reprieve. A distinct sensation of hope arose in my mind. A dark form glided to my side, and seated itself on the rail.

‘You hear eight bell?’ she said. ‘Listen now, you all right—no more poison—he go away.’ She held my hand—the pulse was steady and regular. In spite of my efforts at calmness and self-control, I was sensible of a strange exaltation of spirit. The heaven above, the sea below, seemed animate with

messengers of pardon and peace. Even poor Nellie, the untaught child of a lonely isle 'placed far amid the melancholy main,' seemed transformed into a celestial visitant, and her large, dark eyes glowed in the light of the mystic moon rays.

'You well, man Hil'ree!' she said in the foc'sle vernacular. 'No more go maté. Nellie so much glad,' and here her soft low tones were so instinct with deepest human feeling that I took her in my arms and folded her in a warm embrace.

'How's poor Dick?' I asked, as we walked aft to where Hayston and the rest of the cabin party were seated.

'Poor Dick dead!' she said; 'just die before me come up.'

The people we had brought for the big firm, mostly Line Island natives, were quiet and easily controlled. Hayston now and then executed orders of this sort, though he would

have scorned the idea of turning the *Leonora* into a labour vessel. He was naturally too humane to permit any ill-treatment of the recruits, and having his crew under full control, always made matters as pleasant for these dark-skinned 'passengers' as possible.

But there were voyages of very different kind,—voyages when the recruiting agents were thoroughly unscrupulous, caring only for the numbers—by fair means or foul—to be made up. Sometimes dark deeds were done. Blood was shed like water; partly from the fierce, intractable nature of the islanders—sometimes in pure self-defence. But 'strange things happen at sea.' One labour cruise of which Hayston told me—he heard it from an English trader who saw the affair—was much of that complexion. We had plenty of time for telling stories in the long calm days which sometimes ran into weeks. And this was one of them.

One day a white painted schooner, with gaff-headed mainsail, and flying the German flag, anchored off Kabakada, a populous village on the north coast of New Britain. She was on a labour cruise for the German plantations in Samoa.

Not being able to secure her full complement of 'boys' in the New Hebrides and Solomon groups, she had come northward to fill up with recruits from the naked savages of the northern coast of New Britain.

In those days the German flag had not been formally hoisted over New Britain and New Ireland, and apart from the German trading station at Matupi in Blanche Bay, which faces the scarred and blackened sides of a smouldering volcano springing abruptly from the deep waters of the bay, the trading stations were few and far between.

At Kabakada, where the vessel had anchored, there were two traders. One was

a noisy, vociferous German, who had once kept a liquor saloon in Honolulu, but, moved by tales of easily accumulated wealth in New Britain, he had sold his business, and settled at his present location among a horde of the most treacherous natives in the South Seas. His rude good nature had been his safety; for although, through ignorance of the native character, he was continually placing his life in danger, he was quick to make amends, and being of a generous disposition and a man of means, enjoyed a prestige among the natives possessed by no other white man.

His colleague—or rather his opponent, for they traded for opposition firms—was a small, dark Frenchman, an ex-bugler of the Chasseurs d'Afrique, who had spent some years of enforced retirement at New Caledonia. His advent to New Britain had been made in the most private manner, and his reminiscences of the voyage from the

convict colony with his four companions were not of a cheerful nature.

Ten miles away, at the head of a narrow bay that split the forest-clad mountains like a Norwegian fiord, lived another trader, an English seaman. He had been on the island about two years, and was well-nigh sickened of it. Frequently recurring attacks of the deadly malarial fever had weakened and depressed him, and he longed to return to the open, breezy islands of eastern Polynesia, where he had no need to start from his sleep at night, and, rifle in hand, peer out into the darkness at the slightest noise.

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The labour schooner anchored about a mile from the German trader's house, and about two hours afterwards the boat of the Englishman was seen pulling round Cape Luen, and making for Charlie's station. This was because all three traders, being on

friendly terms, it would have been considered 'playing it low down' for any one of them to have boarded the schooner alone.

The day was swelteringly hot, and the sea between the gloomy outlines of Mau Island and the long, curving, palm-shaded beaches of New Britain shore was throwing off great clouds of hot, steamy mist. As the Englishman's boat was about half-way between the steep-wooded point of Cape Luen and Kabakada, she altered her course and ran into the beach, where, surrounded by a cluster of native huts, was the station of Pierre. This was to save the little Frenchman the trouble of launching his clumsy boat.

Pierre, dressed in white pyjamas, with a heavy Lefauchaux revolver in his belt and a Snider rifle in his hand, came out of his house. Addressing his two wives in emphatic language, and warning them to

fire off guns if anything happened during his absence on board the schooner, he swaggered down the beach and into the boat.

‘How are you, Pierre?’ said the Englishman, languidly. ‘I knew you and Hans Muller would expect me to board the schooner with you, or else I wouldn’t have come. Curse the place, the people, the climate, and everything!’

The little Frenchman grinned: ‘Yes, it ees ver’ hot; but nevare mind. Ven ve get to de ’ouse of de German we shall drink some gin and feel bettare. Last veek he buy four case of gin from a valeship, and now le bon Dieu send this schooner, from vich we shall get more.’

‘What a drunken little beast you are!’ said the Englishman, sourly. ‘But after all, I suppose you enjoy life more than I do. I’d drink gin like water if I thought it would kill me quick enough.’

‘My friend, it is but the fevare that now talks in you. See me! I am happy. I drink, I smoke, I laugh. I have two wife to make my café and look aftare my house. Some day I walk in the bush, then, whouff, a spear go through me, and my two wife will weep ven they see me cut up for *rosbif*, and perhaps eat a piece themselves.’

The Englishman laughed. The picture Pierre drew was likely to be a true one in one respect. Not a mile from the spot where the boat was at that moment were the graves of a trading captain, his mate, and two seamen, who had been slaughtered by the natives under circumstances of the most abominable treachery. And right before them, on the white beach of Mau Island, a whaler’s boat’s crew had been speared while filling their water-casks, the natives who surrounded them appearing to be animated by the greatest friendliness.

Such incidents were common enough in those days among the islands to the westward of New Guinea, and the people of New Britain were no worse than those of other islands. They were simply treacherous, cowardly savages, and though occasionally indulging in cannibalistic feasts upon the bodies of people of their own race, they never killed white men for that purpose. Many a white man has been speared or shot there, but their bodies were spared that atrocity—so in that respect Pierre did his young wives an injustice. They would, if occasion needed it, readily poison him, or steal his cartridges and leave him to be slaughtered without the chance of making resistance, but they wouldn't eat him.

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‘It's the *Samoa*,’ said the German, as he shook hands with us. ‘And the skipper is a d—d Dutchman, but a good sort’ (having

once sailed in a Yankee timber ship, trading between Sydney and the Pacific slope, Hans was now an American), 'and as soon as it gets a bit cool, we'll go off. I know the recruiter, he's a chap with one arm.'

'What!' said the Englishman, 'you don't mean Captain Kyte, do you?'

'That's the man. He's a terror. Guldensterns pay him \$200 a month regular to recruit for them, and he gets a bonus of \$10 each for every nigger as well. We must try and get him a few here to fill up.'

'*You* can,' said the Englishman, 'but I won't. I'm not going to tout for an infernal Dutch black-birder.'

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As soon as a breeze set in, the three traders sailed off. The schooner was a fine lump of a vessel of about 190 tons register, and her decks were crowded with male and female recruits from the Solomon group.

There were about fifty in all—thirty-five or forty men and about a dozen women.

The captain of the schooner and his 'recruiter,' Captain Kyte, received the traders with great cordiality. In a few minutes the table was covered with bottles of beer, kummel, and other liquor, and Hans was asserting with great vehemence his ability to procure another thirty 'boys.'

Kyte, a thin man, with deep-set grey eyes, and a skin tanned by twenty years' wanderings in the South Seas, listened quietly to the trader's vapourings, and then said, 'All right, Hans! I think, though, we can leave it till to-morrow, and if you can manage to get me twenty "boys," I'll give you five dollars a head for them, cash.'

The traders remained on board for an hour or two, and in the meanwhile the captain of the schooner sent a boat ashore to fill water-casks from the creek near the

trader's house. Six natives got in—four of whom were seamen from the schooner and two Solomon Island recruits; these two recruits led to all the subsequent trouble.

Kyte was a wonderfully entertaining man, and although his one arm was against him (he had lost the other one by the bursting of a shell), he contrived to shoot very straight, and could hold his own anywhere.

He was full of cynical humour, and the Englishman, though suffering from latent fever, could not but be amused at the disrespectful manner in which the American spoke of his employers. The German firm were, in a small way, the H.E.I.C. of the Pacific; indeed, their actions in many respects, when conducting trading arrangements with the island chiefs, were very similar to those of the Great East India Company—they always had an armed force to back them up.

‘I should think you have natives enough on board as it is, Captain Kyte,’ the Englishman was saying, ‘without taking any more.’

‘Well, so I have in one way. But these d—d greedy Dutchmen (looking the captain and mate of the schooner full in the face) like to see me come into Apia harbour with about 180 or 200 on board. The schooner is only fit to carry about ninety. Of course, the more I have, the more dollars I get. But it’s mighty risky work, I can tell you. I’ve got nearly sixty Solomon boys on board now, and I could have filled down there, but came up along here instead. You see, when we’ve got two or three different mobs on board from islands widely apart they can’t concoct any general scheme of treachery, and I can always play one crowd off against the other. Now, these Solomon Island niggers know me well, and they wouldn’t try any cutting

off business away up here—it's too far from home. But I wouldn't trust them when we are beating back through the Solomons on our way to Samoa—that's the time I've got a pull on them, by having New Britain niggers on board.'

'You don't let your crew carry arms on board, I see,' said the Englishman.

'No, I don't. There's no necessity for it, I reckon. If we were anywhere about the Solomon Islands, and had a lot of recruits on board, I take d—d good care that every man is armed then. But here, in New Britain, we could safely give every rifle in the ship to the "recruits" themselves, and sceeing armed men about them always irritates them. As a matter of fact, these "boys" now on board would fight like h—l for us if the New Britain niggers tried to take the ship. Some men, however,' and his eyes rested on Pierre, Hans, and the

captain, 'like to carry a small-arms factory slung around 'em. Have another drink, gentlemen? Hallo, what the h—l is that?' and he was off up on deck, the other four white men after him.

The watering party had come back, but the two Solomon Islanders (the recruits) lay in the bottom of the boat, both dead, and with broken spears sticking all over their bodies. The rest of the crew were wounded—one badly.

In two minutes Captain Kyte had the story. They were just filling the last cask when they were rushed, and the two Solomon Islanders speared and clubbed to death. The rage of the attackers seemed specially directed against the two recruits, and the crew—who were natives of Likaiana (Stewart's Island)—said that after the first volley of spears no attempt was made to prevent their escape.

The face of Captain Kyte had undergone a curious change. It had turned to a dull leaden white, and his dark grey eyes had a spark of fire in them as he turned to the captain of the schooner.

‘What business had you, you blundering, dunder-headed, Dutch swab, to let two of my recruits go ashore in that boat? Haven’t you got enough sense to know that it was certain death for them. Two of my best men, too. Bougainville boys. By ——! you’d better jump overboard. You’re no more fit for a labour schooner than I am to teach dancing in a ladies’ school.’

The captain made no answer. He was clearly in fault. As it was, no one of the boat’s crew were killed, but that was merely because their European clothing showed them to be seamen. The matter was more serious for Kyte than any one else on board. The countrymen of the murdered boys looked

upon him as the man chiefly responsible. He knew only one way of placating them—by paying some of the dead boys' relations a heavy indemnity, and immediately began a consultation with five Solomon Islanders who came from the same island.

.

In the meantime the three traders returned to the shore, and Hans, with his usual thick-headedness, immediately 'put his foot in it,' by demanding a heavy compensation from the chief of the village for the killing of the two men.

The chief argued, very reasonably from his point of view, that the matter didn't concern him.

'I don't care what you think,' wrathfully answered the little trader, 'I want fifty coils, of fifty fathoms each, of *dewarra*. If I don't get it'—here he touched his revolver.

Now, *dewarra* is the native money of

New Britain ; it is formed of very small white shells of the cowrie species, perforated with two small holes at each end, and threaded upon thin strips of cane or the stalk of the cocoa-nut leaf. A coil of dewarras would be worth in European money, or its trade equivalent, about fifty dollars.

The chief wasn't long in giving his answer. His lips, stained a hideous red by the betel nut juice, opened in a derisive smile and revealed his blackened teeth.

‘He will fight,’ he answered.

‘You’ve done it now, Hans,’ said the Englishman ; ‘you might as well pack up and clear out in the schooner. You have no more sense than a hog. By the time I get back to my station I’ll find it burnt and all my trade gone. However, I don’t care much ; but I hope to see you get wiped out first. You deserve it.’

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All that night the native village was in a state of turmoil, and when daylight came it was deserted by the inhabitants, who had retreated to their bush-houses; the French trader, who had walked along the beach to his station, returned at daylight and reported that not a native was in his town, even his two wives had gone. Nothing, however, of his trade had been touched.

‘That’s a good sign for you,’ said the Englishman. ‘If I were you, Pierre, I would go quietly back, and start mending your fence or painting your boat as if nothing had happened. They won’t meddle with you.’

But this was strongly objected to by his fellow-trader, and just then a strange sound reached them,—the wild cries and howls of chorus, in a tongue unknown to the three men. It came from the sea, and going to the door they saw the schooner’s two whale-

boats, packed as full of natives as they could carry, close in to the shore. Instead of oars they were propelled by canoe paddles, and at each stroke the native rowers fairly made the boats leap and surge like steam launches in a sea-way. But the most noticeable thing to the eyes of the traders was the glitter of rifle-barrels that appeared between the double row of paddlers. In another five minutes the leading boat was close enough for the traders to see that the paddlers who lined the gunwales from stem to stern had their faces daubed with red and blue, and their fighting ornaments on. In the body of the boats, crouching on their hams, with elbows on knees, and upright rifles, were the others, packed as tightly as sardines.

‘Mein Gott!’ gasped Muller, ‘they have killed all hands on the schooner and are coming for us. Look at the rifles.’ He dashed into his trade-room and brought out

about half a dozen Sniders, and an Epsom salts box full of cartridges. 'Come on, boys, load up as quick as you can.'

'You thundering ass,' said the Englishman, 'look again; can't you see Kyte's in one boat steering?'

In another minute, with a roar from the excited savages, the first boat surged up on the beach, and a huge, light-skinned savage seized Kyte in his arms as if he were a child and placed him on the land. Then every man leaped out and stood, rifle in hand, waiting for the other boat. Again the same fierce cry as the second boat touched the shore; then silence, as they watched with dilated eyes and gleaming teeth the movements of the white man.

For one moment he stood facing them with outstretched hand uplifted in warning to check their eager rush. Then he turned to the traders—

‘The devils have broken loose. Have you fellows any of your own natives that you don’t want to get hurt? If so, get them inside the house, and look mighty smart about it.’

‘There’s not a native on the beach,’ said the German; ‘every mother’s son of them has cleared into the bush, except this man’s boat’s crew,’ pointing to the English trader—‘they’re in the house all right. But look out, Captain Kyte, those fellows in the bush mean fight. There’s two thousand people in this village, and many of them have rifles—Sniders—and plenty cartridges. I know, because it was I who sold them.’

Kyte smiled grimly. There was a steely glitter of suppressed excitement in his keen grey eyes. Then he again held up his hand to his followers—

‘Blood for blood, my children. But heed well my words—kill not the women and children; now, go!’

Like bloodhounds slipped from the leash, the brown bodies and gleaming rifle-barrels went by the white men in one wild rush, and passed away out of sight into the comparatively open forest that touched the edge of the trader's clearing.

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‘There they go,’ said Kyte quietly, as he sat down on the edge of the trader’s verandah and lit a cigar, ‘and they’ll give those smart niggers of yours a dressing down that will keep them quiet for the next five years (he was right, they did). Well, I had to let them have their own way. They told me that if I didn’t let them have revenge for the two men that I would be unlucky before I got to Samoa,—a polite way of saying that they would seize the schooner and cut our throats on the way up. So to save unpleasantness, I gave each man a Snider and twenty-five cartridges, and told them to shoot

as many *pigs and fowls* as they liked. You should have heard the beggars laugh. By the way, I hope they do shoot some, we want pork badly.'

'Hallo, they've got to Tubarigan's, the chief's bush-house, and fired it!' said Muller.

A column of black smoke arose from the side of the mountain, and in another second or two loud yells and cries of defiance mingled with the thundering reports of the Sniders and the crackling of the flames.

The little Frenchman and Muller played nervously with their rifles for a moment or two; then meeting the answering look in each other's eyes, they dashed into the trees and up the jungle-clad mountain side in the direction of the smoke and fighting.

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The native houses in New Britain are built of cane, neatly lashed together with coir cinnet, and the roofs thatched with

broad-leaved grass or sugar-cane leaves. They burn well, and as the cane swells to the heat each joint bursts with a crack like a pistol shot.

‘Look now,’ said Kyte to his companion, pointing along the tops of the hills. Clouds of black smoke and sheets of flame were everywhere visible, and amidst the continuous roar of the flames, the crackling of the burning cane-work of the native houses, and the incessant reports of the Sniders, came savage shouts and yells from the raiders, and answering cries of defiance from the New Britain men, who retreated slowly to the grassy hills of the interior, whence they watched the total destruction of some four or five of their villages. These bush-houses are constructed with great care and skill by the natives, and are generally only a short distance from the main village on the beach ; every bush-house stands surrounded by a

growth of carefully-tended crotons of extraordinary beauty and great variety of colour, and in the immediate vicinity is the owner's plantation of yams, taro, sugar-cane, bananas, and betel nuts.

In the course of an hour or two the Solomon Islanders ceased firing, and then the two white men, looking out on the beach, saw a number of the beaten villagers fleeing down to the shore, about half a mile away, and endeavouring to launch canoes.

‘By ——!’ exclaimed Kyte, ‘my fellows have outflanked them, and are driving them down to the beach. I might get some, after all, for the schooner. Will you lend me your boat's crew to head them off? They are going to try and get to Mau Island.’

‘No,’ said the Englishman, ‘I won't. If Pierre and the German are such idiots as to go shooting niggers in another man's quarrel, that's no reason why I should take a hand in it.’

Kyte nodded good-humouredly, and seemed to abandon the idea; but he went into the house after a while, and came out again with a long Snider in his hand.

In a few minutes the Solomon Islanders began to return in parties of two or three, then came the two white men, excited and panting with the lust of killing.

Kyte held a whispered consultation with one of his 'boys,'—a huge fellow, whose body was reeking with perspiration and blood from the scratches received in the thorny depths of the jungle,—and then pointed to the beach, where four or five white-painted canoes had been launched, and were making for an opening in the reef. To reach this opening they would have to pass in front of the trader's house, for which they now headed.

Kyte waited a moment or two till the leading canoe was within four or five hundred

yards, then he raised his rifle, and placing it across the stump of his left arm, fired. The ball plumped directly amidships, and two of the paddlers fell. The rest threw away their paddles and spears, and swam to the other canoes.

‘Now we’ve got them,’ said Kyte, and taking about twenty of his boys, he manned his two boats and pulled out, intercepting the canoes before they could get through the reef into the open.

Then commenced an exciting chase. The refugees swam and dived about in the shallow water like frightened fish, but their pursuers were better men at that game than they, and of superior physique. In twenty minutes they were all captured, except one, who sprang over the edge of the reef into deep water and was shot swimming.

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There were about five - and - twenty

prisoners, and when they were brought back in the boats and taken on board the schooner it was found that the chief was among them. It may have occurred to him in the plantation life of the after-time that he had better have stayed quiet. The Englishman, disgusted with the whole affair, went off with the other white men, leaving his boat's crew for safety in the trader's house, for had the Solomon Islanders seen them they would have made quick work of them, or else Kyte, to save their lives, would have offered to take them as recruits.

The two other traders decided to leave in the schooner. They had made the locality too warm for themselves, and urged the Englishman to follow their example.

‘No,’ he said; ‘I’ve been a good while here now, and I’ve never shot a nigger yet for the fun of the thing. I’ll take my chance with them for a bit longer. The chances

are, you fellows will get your throats cut before I do.'

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However, the schooner arrived safely at Samoa with her live cargo, but Kyte reported to his owners that it would not be advisable to recruit in New Britain for a year or two.

END OF VOL. I

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